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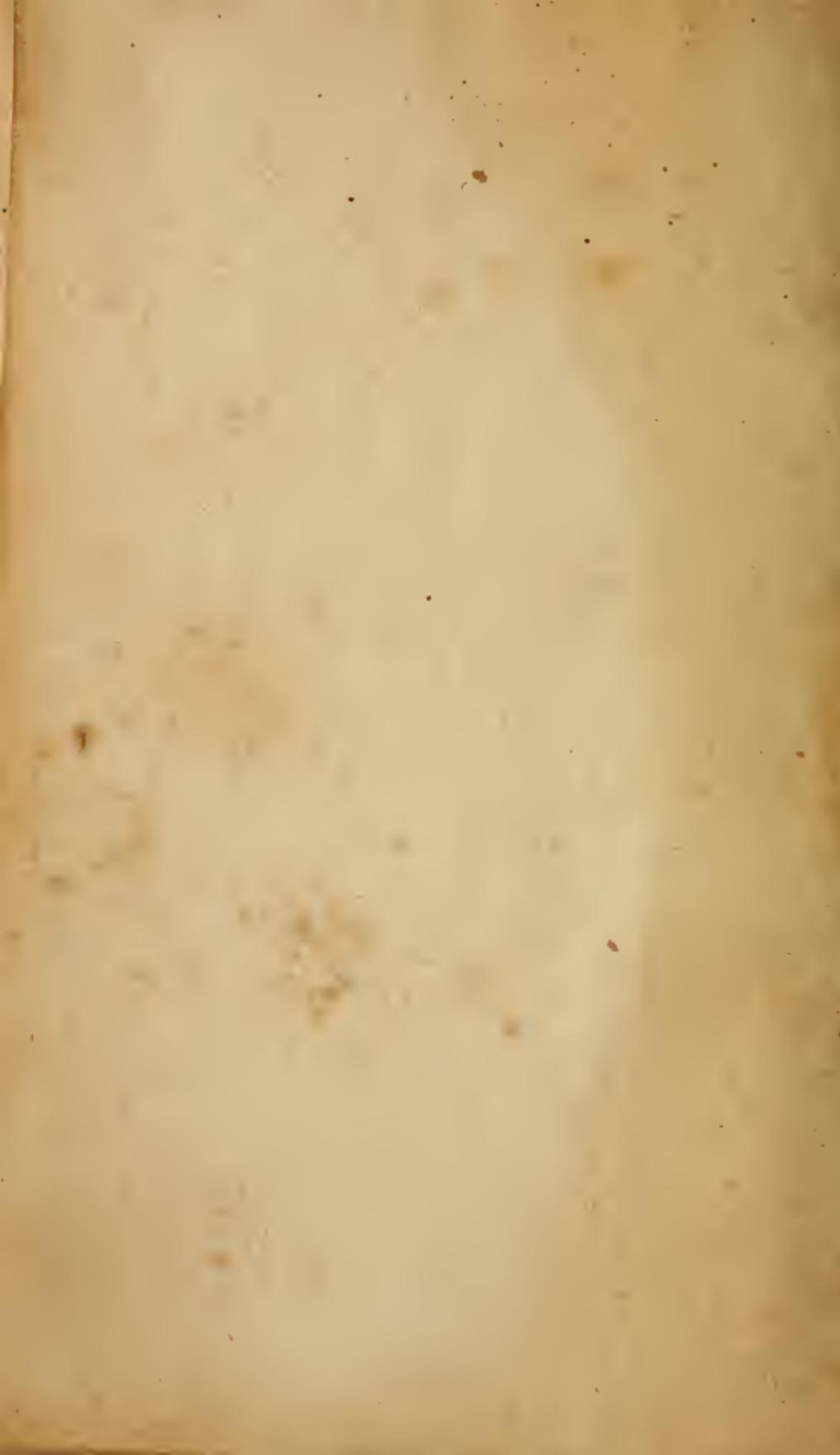
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INFERNAL CONFERENCE;
OR,
DIALOGUES
OF
DEVILS,
ON THE
MANY VICES WHICH ABOUND
IN THE
CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS WORLD.

By JOHN MACGOWAN.

THE FOURTH EDITION.

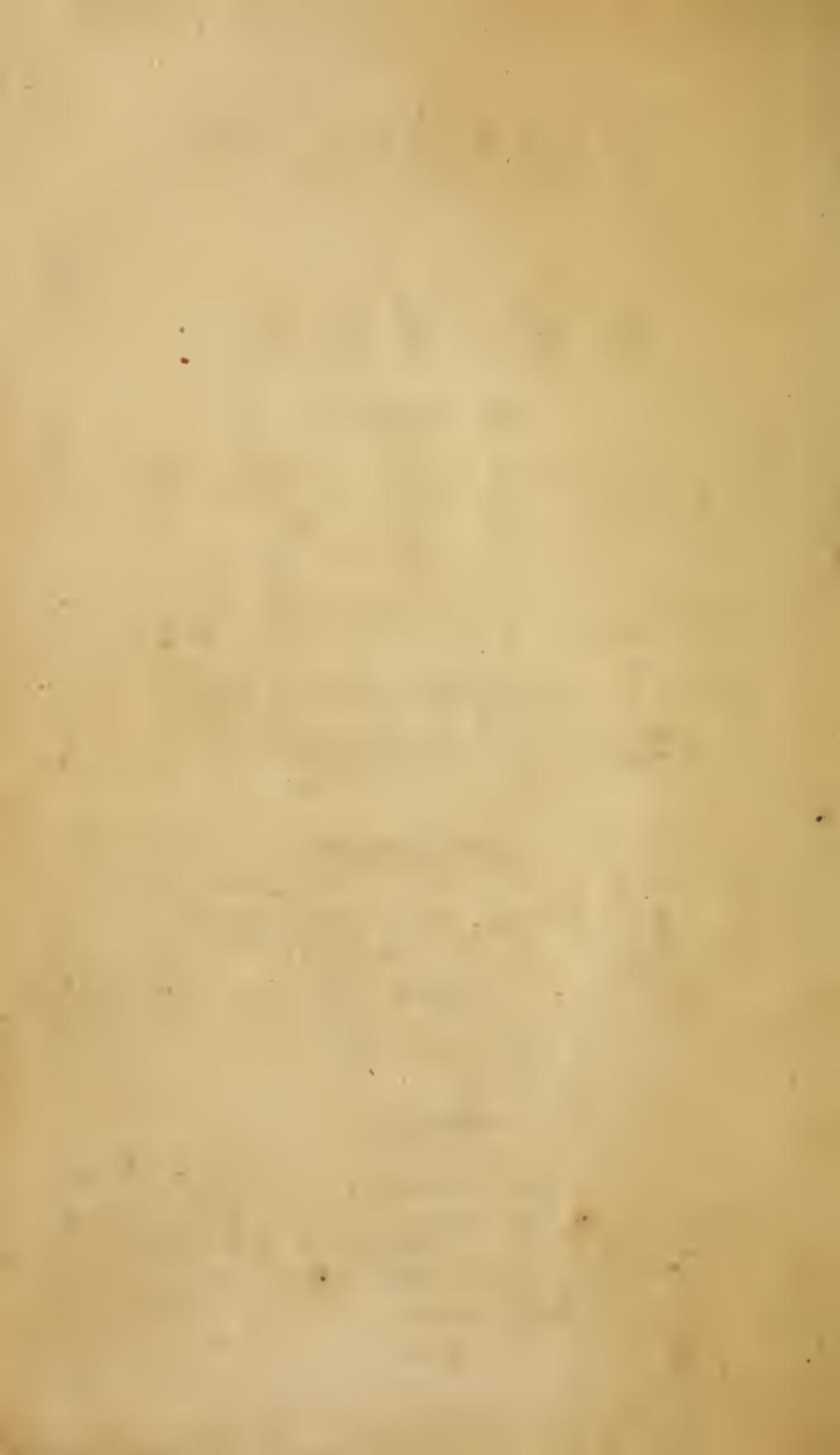
IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOLUME II.

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DIALOGUES
OF
DEVILS.

DIALOGUE XI.

FASTOSUS.

PRAY, Crudelis, what is this mighty affair, that so highly tickles your fancy? Let your kindred share in your mirth, I beseech you.

CRUD. Yesterday afternoon I was conjured up by Squire Broadfield, to assist in the whipping of a poor man, who being ready to perish with hunger, unluckily begged a morsel of bread at his door. But before I give you an account of the whipping, I shall first give you a specimen of the gentleman's character.

Squire Broadfield is a gentleman, and justice of peace. He is worth five thousand pounds a year, and that is enough to make him a gentleman, even if his father had been a beggar; to make him wise, though born a fool; learned, although a very dunce. Indeed it must be own-

ed, the principal part of his worship's education, was had under Dr. Ringwood and Dr. Jowler, the celebrated tutors of his kennel. Their maxims he perfectly understands, and their virtues he has adopted ; but five thousand a year you know, makes the study of the kennel truly classical.

Talk you of Orpheus to him. his worship proposes the virtue of Ringwood to your consideration. Do you admire the ardour which flames in the Iliads ; his worship says, no music like the voice of Jowler. Tell him of the majesty of Virgil, he'll bid you mind well the gait of his horse, what a majestic creature he is. An emperor, says he, might be proud to ride such another. Do you recommend the pleasures of solid learning to him, he is in raptures about the diversions of the chace. As yet he hath avoided the yoke of matrimony ; not that he was ever an admirer of continence, few gentlemen being more conversant with the fair sex than his worship.

He keeps in his house a wanton train of overfed servants, the superfluities of whose table would comfort the bowels of many indigent : besides a pack of hounds, which devour more than serves to maintain all the poor in the parish workhouse. But this miserable wretch who cannot work because he is lame, and having no parish to flee to for relief, chooseth to beg rather than steal, for which his worship ordered him to be severely whipt by my good

son the beedle, till he shall be made willing either to steal for living or to die of hunger.

IMP. I am not certain that John Ketch, Esq. of fatal character had any hand in procuring the law for whipping beggars; but certainly it adds greatly to his revenue. Nor am I certain that it was made on purpose to drive vagrants from begging to stealing, in order more speedily to ease the nation of such a burden; but certain I am, it greatly helps to fill up the Tyburn chronicle. But what more, cousin?

CRUD. As the poor lame fellow was confronted by the beedle, and was convinced of the reality of his worship's benevolent intention to have him well flogged; he fell on his knees, and implored mercy for God's sake, and for Christ's sake, &c. promising that, if he might be forgiven this once, he would never return to these parts any more. He pleaded his indigence, his hungry belly, his lameness, his belonging to no parish, and every thing his fear could devise; but all served only to harden the justice's heart the more. He ordered the beedle to take him away, and do his duty immediately. The beedle signified to him as they drew near to the whipping post, that he felt some relentings of heart towards him; and that if he could only give him an handsome fee, he would favour him as much as his reputation would admit of. But, upon enquiry, finding that the old fellow was so

wicked as to have no money, his heart became like brass, and he resolved to ply him thoroughly to the satisfaction of his worship.

Accordingly when Squire Broadfield and me arrived in company to see the sport, there was the poor rascal, whose poverty was his principal crime, tied to the post and mangled with the cord, which the lusty beedle plied with nervous arm.

Oh ! how his worship and me did laugh to see the villain, whose poverty was obstinate, leaping, as his lameness would let him, and writhing his bloody back, as the whip was justly played about him by the sturdy beedle ; who for his part, would rob and steal and do any thing, rather than be whipped by a trusty brother of the trade ; yea, would act ten thousand villainies rather than die of hunger. This fellow must be a most incorrigible rogue to be sure, if he is not willing by this time either to steal and be hanged, or patiently to die of an empty belly.

IMP. What, Crudelis, have they made a law to whip all the beggars that infest your country ?

CRUD. No, no, Impiator, I heartily wish there were such a law, for then I would even quit my devilship to become king of the beedles. If all beggars were to be punished at the whipping-post, (as I know no reason why they should not) perhaps his worship himself, and his reverence the parson of the parish, would not

escape a thorough drubbing. And yet, Cru-delis as my name is, I think the whip-beggar-law is very partial and unjust, as it lays hold on none but poor petty beggars, who would be content with bread, shins of beef, and table beer ; whilst others may with impunity beg, and obtain some thousands a year of the nation's money.

What are all the ranks of mankind, but so many beggars ? Does not his reverence, the inferior clergyman, beg a living from my lord bishop, or some neighbouring nobleman ; and do not their lordships beg of the king ? Do not the very members of parliament come hat in hand, and meanly beg of the corporation, having no consciousness of worth in themselves ? Do not the pliant courtiers, sue to the favourite for places of trust for the sake of the profit : Beggars all, besides the stern patriot, a pelican which does not appear once in a century. But if their lordships, the noble beggars ; and their honors, the gentlemen beggars, are to be considered as authors of the whipping-law, I should have wondered indeed, if care had not been taken to exempt themselves from its penalty.

The case stands exactly thus. If a gentleman, extravagant beyond his revenue, begs for a thousand or two per annum, he shall not only escape with impunity, but obtain his suit ; provided always, he will be the humble pliant creature of the minister ; but if a poor help-

less, low-born wretch, pinched with hunger, happen to beg a piece of bread at an interdicted place, he shall be exercised at the whipping-post.

INFID. I think sir, you agreed to give us some account of your affairs. We should hold ourselves much honored by the favor. But for this, I would beg the history of my son Crudelis, who makes himself so merry at the expence of foolish vicious mortals.

FAST. His history might be entertaining enough, I suppose; but doubtless mine must be much more elegant and instructive, as my concerns have been mostly with venerable gentlemen, and with none more than those of the sacerdotal function.

Notwithstanding I prevailed with the Jews, almost unanimously to contemn the person and testimony of Jesus of Nazareth, the Christian religion gained ground in the world. Yea, the word of God grew mightily and prevailed over the traditions of both Pagan and Jewish sages; therefore, from thenceforward I found it necessary to deal deep in the things of religion.

I began my trade with ecclesiastical titles, which were altogether unknown in the days of Christ and his apostles; a set of goods very venerable with the populace, and wholly of my manufacture. An assortment of trifles, which greatly pleased the lords of religion and forwarded the deep designs of priest-craft.

IMP. With your leave, sir, I have heard that all the lord bishops are descended in a direct line from the apostles; must it not then follow, that the convocation at Jerusalem consisted of the most reverend fathers in God, their graces, my lord Peter, my lord Paul, &c. &c. metropolitans; and the right reverend fathers in God, my lord Stephen, my lord Philip; my lord Timothy, my lord Barnabas, &c. diocesians.

INFID. Son, you ought not to interrupt your honorable uncle. You may remember that these titles are all of later date.

FAST. My nephew shall hear, if he will but have a little patience. The famous lady Prosperity and you, brother, had not been a very great while at Rome, before I found sufficient encouragement to erect my office for vending sacerdotal titles there; and I must own that for many years I had a brisk run of trade, till in fact the church had room for no more, from the great infallible priest at Rome down to a Cumberland curate. The first production of this kind, was a very brilliant medal inscribed with these five capital letters P. A. T. E. R. which having finished, I presented at a general convocation of bishops, who as yet were not become reverend. They were highly pleased with the device, having never seen such a thing before. The worthies examined it one after another, and all found that the venerable letters well put together, and properly interpreted, signified Father. And certainly the event

has proved, that great is the magical power of this medal.

Every one said to his fellow; “ What can be more agreeable to our function than this venerable title? Are not we the fathers of the people ? ” They forgot than One is the Father of the people, even God. I was therefore desired, with all speed to procure a like medal for every member of this august assembly. Soon after this, I provided medals more highly finished, and inscribed, P, A, T, R, I, A, R, C, H, A, one of which I bestowed on the holy bishop of Rome; a second I gave to the bishop of Alexandria; a third to that of Constantinople; a fourth to that of Jerusalem, and a fifth to him who presided in the church of Antioch. In all which places my medals were more highly valued than the finest ruby; and he who could by any means obtain one of them, was supposed to be elevated far above the common rank of mortals.

Long and very successfully had I followed this medalion trade, when a famous and worthy prelate of Rome, who was a great admirer of my productions, came into my office; after doing obeisance to me, and turning over my pretty devices, he asked me, “ If I thought with all my ingenuity, I could produce a genuine medal with this inscription,

P, A, P, A, S, : S, U, P, R, E, M, U, S,

OR,

EPISCOPUS UNIVERSALIS.”

I told him that, if all the artists in hell, were to unite their wisdom in one mechanical head, it would be utterly impossible; for said I, the whole creation doth not furnish sufficient materials. But if it please your holiness, I can make you a sham medal of that sort, which may perhaps answer all the ends you have in view, as well as if it were real. Oh! said he, I care not for my part whether it is real or counterfeit, if I can only by your assistance, my worthy Fastosus, impose upon the credulity of mankind: and make the world believe that I am supreme pope and universal bishop; then I should reign with despotic power, over the estates and consciences of all Christians. My good friend, please you to make me the medal and I will cause the world believe that I had it from the Almighty, with letters patent under the broad-seal of heaven, for the sole use of it to me and my successors for ever. "I well know, returned I, that your holiness means no more, than in a pious manner to impose the cheat upon the world, the better to fill your coffers, and aggrandize your name; in which laudable uudertaking, your adored Fastosus shall be ever ready to direct and assist."

To work I went, having called in the assistance of several of our friends, and made a counterfeit medal, in the likeness of a treble crown, with certain inscriptions of the cabalistic kind upon it. They were short but pithy sentences,

as you shall hear. On the one side of the first crown was inscribed,

He that is honored as the wearer of this medal, is possest of infallible knowledge.— Opposite to that was carved, in fine Italian, He is supreme over all laws divine and human.—On the right side of the second crown were these words in large capitals, This is the head of the church.—On the left were these, This is the vicar of Christ and successor of Peter.—On the third and uppermost crown were the following, The keys of heaven, hell, and purgatory, are in his possession, and used only at his pleasure. Round the edge was this writing, He reigneth supreme over all the kings of the earth, putteth down one and exalteth another at his pleasure.

When finished, I presented it to the arch-prelate, who received it with all imaginable thankfulness, viewed it with the most exquisite delight, and oftener than once, protested by his infallibility that he had never seen any thing contrived with equal art, nor so suitably adapted to his aspiring principles. Transported with joy he cried out, “O thou ingenious spirit! bless thee for thy assistance! This precious medal will exalt my name above all that is called God; all the European princes will now become my vassals, and the adorers of my priestly majesty. But to complete the work, I pray thee, good Fastosus, think of some suitable device for me, by which I may bind all the

various ranks of the clergy to my interest ; for I shall never dare to show my miraculous medal, nor divulge the delightful inscriptions on it, unless I have something of the like nature to present to their reverences ; for this alone will excite them to favour the cheat. As for laymen, the scum of nature, I regard not them. They are asses, upon whom we shall ride with pleasure and profit ; and if at any time they ride restif, we will tame them with the rod of discipline, and so belabour them with the cudgel of excommunication, that with gladness they shall submit implicitly to our decisions. Could not the great Fastosus strike me a variety of medals, of different worth and designs ; and lodge them safely in my possession, that I may have the sole distribution of them amongst my depending clergy ; for unless they cleave as close to me, as the scales to the back of Leviathan, I shall never be able to support my pretensions to infallibility and supremacy.

To which I replied, " Great priest, in order to bind the clergy inviolably to your interest, let me advise you to take care that your decisions be always in their favour ; place your own grandeur in the front of all your proceedings and let theirs immediately follow it ; which advice the good man cordially embraced, and ever since has invariably followed it with the utmost precision.

From henceforth, continued I, I give you full power and authority to preside over all

those medals which I have already issued forth ; and for the future the disposal of them shall be at your holiness's pleasure. I will moreover add to the number, and you shall have more than sufficient to gain all the clergy to your party. But observe, you must receive this power at the hand of great Fastosus, for it is by me alone you can lord it over the estates and consciences of men. The great prelate heard with attention, and then rejoined, " Mighty Fastosus, if you will oblige me in this, you may depend upon me and all my successors as faithful subjects ; impudently obedient servants to your highness, and your father Belzebub. Nor do I doubt but the rest of the priests, for the sake of power, will be equally loyal to you and implacable enemies to Immanuel, therefore your kindnesses shall be gratefully returned on our parts.

" Very well, said I, but be sure that all your villainy be carried on under the shew of sanctity, otherwise you will do us but little service."

AVAR. Then, sir, by what you say, it may be concluded the hoary prelate at Rome is very sensible that he is Belzebub's agent, and that all his pretensions beyond those of the lowest pastor are an imposition..

FAST. Yes, Avaro, he knows it very well, and that makes him the more like unto us ; indeed the cheat is so palpable, that any one who has read his Bible with attention must needs see through it. But by these proceedings I

soon found I had cut out a great deal of work for myself, so that I was obliged to be doubly diligent. However, my sole delight being to promote the works of darkness, I soon struck off seventy new medals, inscribed CARDINALIS. These I presented to his holiness, who examined them with great attention, and was highly pleased with the ingenious device.

“ Most noble spirit, said he to me, these medals, I perceive, will raise the gentlemen who receive them next in dignity to myself, and they will be the first and most able to support the see of Rome.” You must needs know, my friends, that this prediction has been fully accomplished. For in all ages, since the cardinals received their medals, they have been truly indefatigable in establishing the power and supremacy of the pope. His holiness and they being so intimately connected, that they must stand or fall together.

In the next place, I struck off a considerable number somewhat inferior to the former, distinguished by a Mitre on one side, and on the other by the inscription ARCHIEPISCOPUS which in like manner I presented to the father of the world, much to his satisfaction. These, said he, shall fix the class next to the former, and I doubt not but every one of them will be sufficiently obsequious in expectation of a cardinal’s hat. The archbishops being thus disposed of, I took all the diocesan medals, which I had formerly produced, and put them under

the care and disposal of the great prelate; and he was pleased to assign them to those, who were next in place to the archbishops, each one in hnmble expectation of higher preferment.

AVAR. Hah uncle! was it you that made those titles ascribed to the various orders of the clergy?

FAST. Was it I, do you ask? Yes, it was I indeed! Who ever read in the New Testament, any thing at all about a supreme bishop, or about cardinals, and lord bishops? I made them all I assure you cousin: though I will not affirm, that every person who has borne these names, has been absolutely under the dominion of pride.

To my great honor I speak it Avaro, I ceased not when I had made their lordships the diocesians, but went on with my trade, till I had procured curious medals for a very great number of abbots, swarms of monks and friars, jesuits, franciscan and dominican friars, with a long train of etceteras, who soon appeared in shoals, as numerous as locusts when they ascend out of the bottomless pit. Then followed the bare-headed capuchins, mendicants, penitents, pilgrims, &c. without number. Those religious gentry owe all their dignity to me, unless it may be that Avaro has some little hand in the matter.

AVAR. You do me great honor, sir, in mentioning me as a worker together with you.

FAST. After all this, the subtle priest thought that the antichristian hierarchy of Rome could not stand upon a foundation solid enough, unless all, or at least some of the princes of Europe were invested with ecclesiastical titles, and so adopted into the new modelled church. Therefore I told his holiness, that I had three highly finished medals by me ready prepared, fitting for royal personages. Here said I, is one inscribed, *Rex Catholicus*; let it be presented to your servant his majesty of Spain. This second medal, inscribed *Rex Christianissimus* will be an acceptable present to your vassal the French king; and this third inscribed, *Rex Fidelissimus*, I advise you to bestow upon the little monarch of Portugal. His hoary holiness with raptures replied, "Very good most noble Fastosus, this device will doubtless secure all these three princes, as so many pillars to support my infallibility. But what of the king of England, sir? I dread those islanders. Is there do medalion charm, by which that invincible prince can be secured to our interest? I pray you good Fastosus lend me an hand in this."

I shall endeavour to serve your holiness, replied I, and then he withdrew. Soon after I presented him with a medal suited to his wish. It bore this inscription, *Defensor Fide*, and was given to the monarch of England; but alas! it has not answered our expectations, for this same monarch instead of defending the

orthodox faith of Rome, was the first crowned head that protested against the supremacy of the Italian bishop.

AVAR. It is somewhat droll that the king of England having shaken off the yoke of Rome, should still keep possession of the medal, which his predecessors received as a present from the pope. One would think that when the pope himself was renounced, in strict justice all his gifts should have been restored, and the title Defender of the Faith, have been by a protestant prince rejected amongst the rest of Romish trumpery ; but wonders never cease. Did you finish here, sir ?

FAST. No, Avaro, I assure you, many titles besides these were first issued from my office, such as His Grace, a title claimed by many a graceless duke, as well as antichristian priest. His Lordship, a title by which many a profane nobleman and irreligious bishop are distinguished. His Honor, claimed by many persons who never felt one desire after true honor. When a gentleman's honor depends merely upon his estate, table and equipage, such a title as His Honor, very ill becomes him, yet many such there are who claim the appellation.

AVAR. If high birth and an ample fortune do not entitle a man to, his Honor, I pray you what will ?

FAST. An honorable conduct, Avaro, without which he is only a clown in disguise. And many such fools you may find wrapt in scarlet and lace, with swords dangling by their sides.

IMP. I beg leave to observe that, according to modern maxims in my country, he is esteemed a man of honor, who can imitate the popish priests in scorning wedlock, and frequenting the company of lewd women. He who is a stranger to every delicate and chaste sentiment; who scorns religion, disregards morality, and thinks it beneath his dignity to keep any of the commands of God; or even for a moment, to reflect that there is an hereafter. It would be difficult to persuade some people, that the British senate is too much composed of such men of honor as these. I should be glad, sir, to hear your opinion of a man of honor more at large, for I know that you are wise.

FAST. A gentleman of true honor, fails not to improve his estate, be it great or small, to the best advantage; for he is neither indolent nor extravagant. His increasing revenues are not heaped up for adoration, nor laid by as useless lumber, but applied to clothe the naked back, and refresh the empty belly. His principal care is not how he may aggrandize his family, but how he may best serve his king and country: for he lives not to himself, but to the public good. He adheres to strict truth, is an utter stranger to impertinent raillery, and perfectly detests the voice of slander. In his civil affairs he does the same things to superiors, inferiors, and equals, which he would wish

others in like circumstances to do for himself. If at any time he is so unhappy as to give his neighbour just cause of offence, he is free and open in confessing his error, and ready to retrieve it to the utmost of his power. The title of His Honor is well becoming such a man as this, whether his estate is great or small, his birth illustrious or obscure. But mercenary statesmen, plunderers of the public ill deserve the titles with which they are distinguished. Happy might it be for Britain, if she could always procure officers for every department in government, who would prefer the welfare of the nation to their own personal and domestic emolument. And this every man of true honor will be sure perpetually to do.

AVAR. Then uncle, I am inclined to think, that men of honor are not quite so plenty as some people have imagined.

FAST. I am sorry to say it, Avaro ; but bad as the world is, there are still many to be found, who with propriety may be called men of honor : but it is well for us, they are mostly of obscure character. They cannot act the eringing knave, and vilely flatter their superiors, in order to gain preferment. Their countenances adorned with comely modesty, cannot contend with the impudence of fools and rogues, therefore continue obscure, even when the most worthless are exalted. But if a truly honorable man, should by some miracle ascend to an eminent station, and be entrusted with public concerns, his country is sure to find

a nursing-father, and not an accursed step-dame in him, as is often the case with other governors.

There is likewise, his reverence the parson, a title ascribed to many men, who lead very irreverend lives.

AVAR. True, sir, but it is the vulgar opinion, that the reverence of the parson does not depend upon his moral conduct, but upon his investiture received from the hand of the bishop.

FAST. I know it, Avaro, but it is a prevailing mistake. Imposition of the hands even of an apostle, could never make any man reverend, whose doctrine is heterodox, or whose conversation is immoral, otherwise our friend Simon of Samaria might have been numbered among their reverences. Indeed, Avaro, were any man hardy enough to attempt it, I know of no subject more proper for satire than the pretended reverence of the parsons. But he must be daring indeed, who would set himself to oppose the orthodox priests of the day, for that would be thought by many the very same as to oppose God almighty himself, and every body would cry atheist at him.

AVAR. Pray, sir, what is your opinion of reverence, and to whom may the epithet of reverend consistently be given?

FAST. To very few of the leaders of any denomination, Avaro, and yet perhaps to some few of every denomination among protestants,

I hate them cousin, and could not bear to talk of them were it not to oblige you, for they are avowed enemies to our administration, as you will see by the description of them. For he is a reverend minister, whether he was educated at Oxford or Aberdeen, who makes not gold but the glory of Immanuel, and the welfare of immortal souls, the first ends of his labours. Who is assiduous in his study, fervent in his ministry, and has a paternal affection for his people. Who studies not how to please the great, or to gain the esteem of the staring multitude, but to approve himself to God and the consciences of men, not shunning to declare the whole counsel of God, without any mixture of the inventions or traditions of men.

You may follow this man from the church to the market, from the pulpit into his family, and find him all of a piece; his whole conduct is one chain of uniformity. But it is not every gownsman, either papal or protestant, nor even every dissenting minister, whom this description suits. Some there are, and who can deny it, who are haughty and overbearing in their spirits; indolent in study; cool and lifeless in their ministry; thoughtless and unconcerned about the real welfare of their people. Yea some are so wretchedly lazy, or so much taken up with idle and vain amusements, that it is with difficulty they can bring forth once a week an oration, fifteen or twenty minutes long, and that scanty production perhaps,

when it is exhibited, proves no more than a lecture on moral philosophy ; or it may be a libel against some different party or denomination of Christians. You may follow some of them from the church to their families, and be fully convinced that they are divines only in name ; they neglect in their families the very duties which they recommend to others ; and what is still more, connive at the same vices in their families, which they expose and condemn in the pulpit. But after all they have the cure of souls, and are the venerable and reverend clergy, in the same manner as the pope is the head of the church, I mean by craft and usurpation.

AVAR. I have got a noble company of these same parsons in my corporation of Avarice, whose business it is to vend wind in order to obtain wealth. A company confined to no one denomination, but made up of all ; every one of this company has got his own system of priestcraft, but all are intent upon the main point, viz. to get as much wealth by his craft as possible. Indeed the mother church of Rome very far outstrips the rest, for she may lawfully boast that her clergy, to a man, are the stedfast worshippers of the god Avaro, their great benefactor.

However the protestants, both Calvinists and Lutherans, all who are freemen in the company of avarice, keep as near as possible to the orthodox priests of Rome, in making a lucrative

trade of what they call the gospel. And however they differ about what is, and what is not gospel, they see eye to eye in regard to making profit of it, and turning the altar of the Lord to their own emolument.

INFID. How should it be otherwise, my son, seeing there are in some places manufactures, on purpose for making parsons ?

FAST. So I have heard, brother, with this addition, that the making of parsons is reckoned both a lucrative and honorable employment, not unworthy of my own patronage. But between you and me, the parson-makers are grievously disappointed frequently, however little they are sensible of it; for when they put their materials into the refining furance, they hope to see at the end of the process, a bright and shining minister of Jesus Christ come forth: But lo ! a learned calf is produced, and a fervent adorer of the god Avaro.

INF. It cannot be otherwise ; for to our grief I speak it, the unalterable Immanuel hath reserved to himself the wisdom, power, and prerogative to make ministers of the gospel ; and if men, like Jannes and Jambres, will take upon them to imitate the inimitable works of the Almighty, they may be permitted to make things which may for a time be mistaken for gospel ministers, even as those magicians performed miracles by divine permission.

IMP. So then, gentlemen, I perceive your opinion is, that learning the languages and

sciences unfits a man for being a gospel minister.

FAST. No Impiator, no such thing, or the gift of tongues had not been given at the feast of Pentecost: But it may be averred, that, if a man has no more learning than the most learned university can give him, he cannot possibly be a minister of Jesus Christ. It is resting in these things as the only qualifications we think proper to laugh at Impiator.

AVAR. Among those mercenary orators, there are whom we may call the jumblers. They are such who study not their sermons from the scripture, but compile them from the writings of other men: being destitute of judgment to direct them in their compilations, they are obliged to rely implicitly on the sentiments of their authors. So it comes to pass, that they contradict on one Sabbath what they asserted and half-proved the day before, merely because they happened to stumble on authors of different sentiments. But alas! poor men, what shall they do? It is their trade; they know not how to get a living without it; they cannot dig, and to beg they are ashamed; therefore are under a necessity of jumbling forward in the best manner they can. Of late years indeed, this jumbling tribe have hit on a more happy method of management, by which they both save their reputation and laborious study. Amongst learned men there have always been some few of genius and in-

dustry, who have found means to turn the dullness and indolence of their brethren to their own emolument. They compose sermons, print and sell them to the others, who pay first a good price for them then preach them, that is to say, read them to their several congregations. Enfield's, and Webb's, and Trusler's sermons, have been of great use to many a dull and lazy clergyman.

FAST. How is this, Avaro, you speak of the parsons as if they were at best but learned fools? How is it possible they should be so highly revered by the people if they were such?

AVAR. I speak but of some of them, uncle; and to make good what I say, I can tell you that it is not the man, whom the ignorant populace revere, so much as the gown, cassock, and band, and these they would revere if they were seen upon an ass, provided always, his ears were hid with a bush of well powdered hair. I assure you gentlemen, amongst the intelligent laity, it is deemed a maxim, that any blockhead will do very well for a parson, if he has but friends to recommend him to a living: as a proof of this I shall tell you a short story. There is one Mr Provident, a merchant in London, who hath four sons at the grammar-school, under the direction of a learned gentleman of excellent sense. It was lately Mr Provident made a visit to his sons and their tutor, when he took occasion to ask Mr Teachum's advice in regard to his disposal of them.

To which the schoolmaster replied, “Sir, I have often with pleasure observed, a penetrating judgment, solid understanding, and an inviolable attachment to truth, ennobled with the generous principles of true benevolence, in your eldest son. These qualities, sir, are excellently adapted to the mercantile life ; I would therefore advise you to train him up in your own business. Your second son, Master Thomas, hath genius sufficient for any business; but I hope, sir, you will excuse me, if I tell you that I have discerned one thing in him, which in my judgment, unfits him for the capacity of a merchant. As I know, sir, you would have me to speak freely, you will not be offended with me, if I tell you, that it is a selfishness and contractedness of spirit, together with a violent propensity to lying and equivocation. If he were my son, sir, I would bring him up to the law, in which he will very likely make a conspicuous figure. Your youngest son, Master James, has, if I mistake not, along with a very considerable degree of dullness, an heart that is a stranger to sympathetic feelings ; but possesseth genius sufficient for a physician. I would point out the royal college for his residence.”

Here Mr Provident the merchant interrupted him, and said, “Sir, you have given your opinion of the two eldest, and the youngest, but you say nothing of Harry, my third son ; I pray what do you say of him?” To which

the teacher with a blush replied, “ If it is agreeable, sir, I would advise you to make him a clergyman.” To this the father, with a mixture of grief and anger, replied, “ What sir, do you think he hath genius sufficient for nothing else ? ” I am afraid not, said the master ; but you can easily make friends with my lord bishop, and procure him a considerable benefice. Take this step, sir, and his lack of genius will scarcely be known, as he may preach and administer the offices of the church by proxy, which you know is very gentleman-like.

INFID. And do you really think, Avaro, that it is want of abilities to preach, that causeth so many vicars to keep journeymen to do their work for them ?

AVAR. With some, sir, want of abilities is the principal cause, and with the rest, an utter aversion to the work, though by the way, they once professed to be drawn to it by no less an influence than that of the Holy Ghost : but that was when a benefice was the object of their pursuit, and therefore not to be regarded after their end is obtained.

FAST. Cousin Avaro, here I believe we must stop, as we have certainly overstaid our time. I hold it good therefore that we depart, and meet here at the usual time to-morrow. Business you know must not be neglected. Adieu, my kinsmen.

DIALOGUE XII.

Fastosus.

WELL gentlemen, I hope no idleness has attended any of our fraternity since last meeting. I went directly from you to assist a London jeweller in forming a set of ear-rings and pendants upon a new construction. I made him sensible of the most elegant plan, enjoined him to pursue it, give the praise to his patron *Fastosus*, and so I left him.

IMP. I pray you, sir, what is the real use of ear-rings? For my part, I have never been able to apprehend it, unless it is to save a small matter of gold against a day of penury.

FAST. They are of no use at all to the wearer, Impiator, though they help the goldsmith and lapidary not a little; but they are of excellent use to our government. You know the boring of the ear always was, and now is an emblem of servitude. Yea, it is an incontrovertible point, that the act of boring, and suffering the ear to be bored, is a token of subjection to the infernal monarch.

IMP. Ah, sir, how evidently the spleen would rage among the ladies, were they to know what you say of them.

FAST. And let it rage cousin, what is that to me? The ladies are too much in love with courtly Fastosus, to banish me from among them even in their spleenish fits. But to explain the doctrine of ear-rings, be it observed, that the crafty Belzebub hath an invisible chain fixed to the ear-ring, by which he leads the wearers a wild-goose chase through all the vanities of the times. No sooner does the sable governor tug a lady by the ear, than she feels an impulse upon her heart, which directs her to the Playhouse. Opera, Vauxhall, Saddlers-Wells, or elsewhere; but very seldom to the church. If at any time, for the sake of company, she takes her pleasure at church, the great deceiver keeps such a gingling of the chain in her ear, that she cannot attend to one word of the service; by these means the Park, the Mall, the Playhouse, and the Church, are in effect the same thing to many ladies of fashion.

AVAR. And are all who wear rings in their ears, to be looked upon as slaves to the great Belzebub, uncle?

FAST. No Avaro, not all, for the invincible Immanuel hath broken the chains and loosened the bands of servitude from many, nevertheless, they still wear the rings in their ears to testify what they have been. And what news from your friends, Avaro?

AVAR. Very little, sir; only that diligence, frugality, and good husbandry, go on as usual.

All heads plodding, and all hands active to get and to save; for getting and saving is all the cry with them. I had a little matter to attend to last night, at the Swan-tavern, where there was a very respectable meeting of manufacturers, by whom some few things tending to promote emolument were considered. The first consultation was, "How they might conveniently lessen the quality of their goods, that their profits might be somewhat advanced;" in order to this a plan was proposed by Mr. Dolus, a very great tradesman, which was unanimously agreed to by the rest. The second thing was to settle the prices, and come into mutual engagements that no one should undersell his brethren, which after some slight alteration was as unanimously settled. You must know, mankind are not satisfied with being oppressed by infernal tyranny; but to add to the devil's work, are got into the happy way of joining in combinations to oppress and devour one another. Nor is this practice peculiar to any one set of men, but is common with dealers of every kind and denomination, from the opulent farmers to the dealers in coals and candles.

When this was done, a question was put, How they should finish a certain quantity of goods against a certain day then proposed? For it seems they have large orders at present. To which one of them said, he thought it necessary to advance the journeymens wages in

order to encourage their diligence. But this gentleman's motion was unanimously rejected, as an unprofitable way of proceeding, very ill-suited to the growing demands of their several families. It was then proposed, that a small premium should be given to every workman who should finish a certain quantity of goods in a limited time, then and there to be stipulated. But this also was objected to, it being alleged, that some method might be found, that would produce the desired end, and yet save all those unnecessary premiums; which if given would introduce a very bad custom.

At last an old gentleman, whose hoary locks shone as silver from under his weather-beaten wig, arose and most judiciously addressed his brethren in the following manner: "Gentlemen, you all know that such is the indolent disposition of journeymen, that in general let their wages be ever so good, they have no notion of obtaining more than will procure them a bare maintenance through the week, and a few quarts of strong beer on Saturday night and Sunday. Therefore to advance their wages, is the certain way to have them work less than they do at present. But let us lessen their wages in proportion to our extraordinary call for goods: for by how much the more we drop the prices of workmanship, by so much the more work shall we have done. A bare living they must have, let the prices be ever so low: and but a bare living they will have, if

they are ever so high. If we advance the price they work less, and if we drop it, they will, they must work more. I say then let us drop the prices."

The old gentleman's advice was cordially embraced by them all, and every one blessed the sagacity of the old fox now grown grey in wisdom. And this day, or to-morrow, the journeymens wages are to be lessened accordingly.

FAST. In the close of our last interview I was going to observe, that my prevalency is great amongst the nobility and gentry. By my indefatigable industry the greater part of them are rendered altogether insensible of their origin, so that they look down on their inferiors as a set of despicable creatures, of a species very different from themselves; not considering that my Lord Superbo and poor Lazar Ask-alms are by nature brethren, formed of the same materials, and conceived in the womb of the same earth.

AVAR. Yet sir, if my observations are just, I think they have some kind of an imperfect notion that they were originally formed of the earth; but as one part of the substance of the earth is esteemed much more precious and valuable than another, perhaps the people of fashion have the happiness of being formed of the more rich and esteemed particles, and the rest of mankind the infelicity of deriving their beings from vulgar clay. This is the more likely, as there is a manifest difference between

their constitutions and those of people in the lower spheres of life; the first being brittle and feeble, the latter more robust and healthy.

FAST. That is false philosophy Avaro; the brittleness you speak of does not proceed from any defect in the natural constitution of their frame, nor from any rottenness in the materials of which they are made, but hath its cause from themselves. Many of them in their infancy are nearly starved, from an infamous notion that enough of wholesome food is injurious to them*: and you will commonly find that food which yields the most healthful aliment, is withheld from them at the instance of Dr Scrawl the family physician. This same gentleman has not so little sense under his great wig as not to know that his own personal emolument, is intimately connected with the weak constitutions of people of quality, especially the ladies. By his many years study of physic he has proved to a demonstration, that if the young gentry were suffered to eat enough of wholesome food like the farmer's children, his business would not be worth following.

* Some learned physicians, those celebrated defrauders of the grave, have found out that bread itself, which has been esteemed the staff of life in all ages, is at last become dangerous to the constitution, and therefore to be used with caution by all sorts of people, especially such as are best able to fee the doctor in case of personal indisposition. As for the poor it is less matter what they eat, as the faculty can reap but little advantage from their sickness.

AVAR. I know it well—for there is one of my disciples, a certain physician eminent in practice, who hath acquired a genteel fortune by prescription, and who, if he is indisposed himself, will not suffer an apothecary's drug to pass his gullet, a plain indication that he knows it to be hurtful. I have often thought, a good constitution put into the hand of the doctor, is like a good cause put into the hands of the lawyers, it gets worse with deceitful handling. When a man is by the force of medicine fairly got down, the skilful physician knows very well how to hold him betwixt life and death as long as possible; till at last he dies by inches of that prevailing distemper which kills so many people of fashion.

FAST. True, Avaro, but farther to prove the gentry the causers of their own infirmity, I would observe that what in infancy, penury and want leave of the constitution unconsumed, luxury and idleness well nigh finish in youth; so that when the lady comes to embrace an husband, the one half of her remaining days are spent under the hand of the Doctor, and the other half in pleasure and dissipation. As for the young gentleman, before the boyish down on their faces is able to resist the razor, they have commonly contracted such loathsome disorders, as render them more fit for an infirmary than for the marriage bed, and have more need of a surgeon than a wife. Thus, Avaro, you may see by what means

the constitutions of the gentry are so frequently enfeebled.

That they are formed of the same materials with their inferiors will appear, when you consider, that, there were none either noble or ignoble in the original state of mankind ; all were on a common level ; but when we had made a conquest of them, it became necessary for the Almighty to dissolve the original equality, that the world might be rendered in some measure tolerable to all, amidst the confusion and disorder which our dominion over them had introduced. For if people cry out that the world is bad now, it is certain it would be infinitely worse were superiority and inferiority utterly abolished. Moreover the Almighty to manifest the equity of his procedure, has so ordered it, that the system of superiority and inferiority is perpetually upon the change. You may find some persons now, asking alms from place to place, who are descended from princes and nobles ; and others in the most exalted station, who had their descent from very beggars.

INF. Ay brother, that very consideration, to urge no more, if duly attended to, would prevent the contempt which people of elevated rank are apt to let fall on their inferiors. But let them go on till the grand leveller Death approach. He spares neither rich nor poor, noble or ignoble. Samael knows no distinctions, cannot be bribed like temporal judges,

admits of no excuses, and is an utter stranger to pity. At prince, at peasant, at the noble earl and his servile groom, at the dame of honor and the scorched cookmaid, he aims alike his unerring shaft, and brings all again to the dust from whence they were taken, to rot in their original equality.

FAST. There is another race which we distinguish by the name of mongrels, with whom I am deeply concerned. This generation of half-bred gentry includes tradesmen, the gentlemen of the law and of the faculty, together with the farmers. These gentry consider themselves as pretty near, if not altogether on a level with the country 'squire, and therefore affect the manners of their superiors as much as possible. They are gentlemen, their wives are ladies and madams, and their children masters and misses. Hundreds of such gentlemen and ladies have I known, who could not justly boast that any of their ancestors, back to the tenth generation, were proprietors of so much as a single cottage, with a cabbage garden. Yet they imperiously assume a title of address, equal to that of the queen's majesty; and no labourer or mechanic must dare to approach them, without a sir or madam in his mouth.

INF. I have sometimes thought those ladies you speak of, are either ashamed of their given names, or hold them too sacred for the profane mouths of servants and vulgar creatures; and indeed he would be deemed the most un-

mannerly wretch that ever trod upon English ground, who should say that Sarah Algood is his mistress; for Sarah must give place to madam, and she is now madam Algood, the shop-keeper's lady, and it would be more than her place is worth for a servant to name her mistress in terms less respectable.

AVAR. Excuse me, gentlemen, you know I love to be concerting schemes of profit, and here is one ready projected, which if faithfully executed, would either fill the exchequer, or make a distinction betwixt persons of real quality and their apes in middle life.

FAST. What is your scheme cousin? let us hear it if feasible.

AVAR. I would advise the nobility, gentry, &c. never to go to an horse-course, cock-pit, or play-house; not to go to Bath nor a bawdy-house, that is to say, never to rest till they have procured a bill, in which it shall be enacted, that very man shall pay the sum of ten pounds sterling per annum, who suffers his wife to assume the name of madam. I would likewise have a tax of half the value laid upon every young master and miss, the farmers, apothecaries, attorneys and tradesmen's children, unless the husband or father can make it appear that his annual rent, clear of all incumbrance, is not less than four hundred pounds; if so much, or upwards, he should stand exempted from any such penalty, and enjoy the free use of such names of quality in his family.

INF. Although it is quite foreign to my pur-

pose, to dictate any thing to mankind which may be of service to them, I am free among ourselves to say, that my son's scheme is well concerted and might answer valuable purposes were it carried into execution. The numerous bankruptcies, which make trade so precarious in England, have their spring in this fatal imitation of people of quality, so prevalent among tradesmen. Could this so very pernicious practice by any means be suppressed, the industrious merchant and manufacturer, would meet with fewer losses by their retailing customers.

To your scheme, however, I would add another tax equally necessary, and that is upon every Play-house, Assembly-room, and place of pleasurable resort. One-fifth at least, of every ticket to Almack's Ranelagh, every Play-house, Cornely's, Sadler's-wells, the Pantheon, and every rout whatever, ought to be sacred to government. Till this, or some such thing is done, it will be difficult for the sensible English to believe that there governors aim at any thing beyond their own emolument. As for the tax upon (madam) it appears indispensably necessary, and can admit of no delay; however, we interrupt you Fastosus.

FAST. I have a great deal of pleasure in stirring up people to quarrel with their maker, and to say unto him, "Why hast thou made me thus? I love not the station thou hast placed me in; I have got parts to qualify me for a better than this in which thou hast placed me,

therefore I am not dealt with according to my merit." The poor labourer, who by the way, is the most happy and contented of his species, is not altogether pleased, because he was not born a gentleman and heir to a good estate. The 'squire and his lady are almost mad with anger, because they were not descended of noble ancestors; the nobleman himself takes it very unkind that he was not born to govern a kingdom. He that is born heir to a crown hath two things at which he is much offended: first, because the almighty is so long in taking the father to himself, to facilitate his own accession to the throne: secondly, he is not well pleased because it is a regal, and not an imperial crown to which he is born heir. As for the man who is born to imperial dignity, he is angry because he is not appointed lord of the whole world. And one you know, who having obtained the sway of the whole world was angry with God, because he had not made two worlds for him to govern; even so angry, that he is said to have cried again. Thus in all ranks and degrees of life, I make people quarrel with their maker.

INF. I have often heard it remarked by our infernal sages, that if the ambitious mind were to obtain, what it is now in pursuit of, true contentment would be as far distant as ever; and an Alexander who covets a second world to ravage, could he get that, would want a third, after that a fourth, and so on till he had

plundered the many millions of worlds which God hath made. Even then, were such a thing possible, his ambition would be as insatiable as ever, and his last effort would be the same as that of father Belzebub's; I mean, he would attempt to plunder the eternal throne itself. Thus they allege, that the lowest degree of ambition and discontent in man, if the Almighty were continually to gratify it, would ascend to the most daring attempt, of which the infernal monarch himself is capable. After all, I have observed, that the greater part of people are so far from deeming ambition to be criminal, they think a spice of it is indispensably necessary to a man of honor.

FAST. I know it brother; but that is a striking proof of the blindness to which we have reduced them. Ambition, discontent, &c. reigning in any person, are infallible symptons of an heart totally depraved and altogether under my influence. But let them go on to cherish an ambitious spirit, they will find their mistake at last. That judicious pagan, Epictetus, seems very capable of instructing many who are called Christians, and who have the advantage of the bible. Yes! Infidelis! you and I both know, that ambition is the very vice which ruined our black fraternity, but for it they had been in heaven to this day.

As some quarrel with their maker, on account of their situation in life, I am equally successful in stirring up others, to take offence

at the manner in which the Almighty hath formed their bodies? as to their souls, they do not regard them, indeed seldom consider that they have an immortal spirit belonging to them. If by chance such a thought, as that they have an immortal soul, should pass through their minds, it gives them no concern in what position it is found, because they take it for granted that nobody sees it. So very inconsiderate and stupid are many, that one who understands the language of hearts, provided he could delight in the voice of discontent and murmuring might meet with high entertainment amongst our people. For,

One young lady says, O! if the Almighty had made me an inch and half higher, then my person would have been abundantly more proper; her neighbour is as ill at ease, because she thinks the Creator has bestowed superfluous labour upon her, in giving her a couple of inches of redundant height, which she looks upon as a very considerable deformity. Another says, why did he make me with round shoulders? might he not as easily have made them square? I am ashamed to go into company, because I have not a handsome carriage of the head and neck. What the back-board and girdle can do, has been tried to press in the prominent *os humeri*; but sad experience teaches, that she may as soon wash the Ethiopian white as make that even, which the Almighty hath made crooked. Nor less afflict-

ed is her kinswoman on account of the yellowness of her skin.

AVAR. I have heard several people of allowed knowledge, modestly wish, that all court ladies laboured under the same misfortune the last unhappy gentlewoman does ; being persuaded that if it were so, naked breasts would never more be brought into fashion, to the annoyance of the gentlemen, and the scandal of the ladies, for you know fashions are all born at court.

FAST. Not at the court of London, Avaro, but Versailles, therefore it would indicate better sense in your knowing people, to wish the French ladies the above misfortune. It is held an act of high-treason against the French, for the English court to receive any fashion which hath not had a certificate from Versailles. This policy seems indeed very mysterious, when we consider that the British heroes can so effectually drub the monsieurs, as to make them cry *pecavi*, and at the same time the French ladies should have the English in such absolute subjection.

It is impossible for any person to conceive the trouble I have, in preparing those ladies for the ball or assembly, or pantheon, and what art I am obliged to employ, in hiding their supposed defects and redundancies. The lady who fancies her stature to be somewhat too low, obliges me to add to it the whole length of a super-tall pair of wooden heels, and is extreme-

ly careful to set off her little body to all advantage possible, so that every beholder must be struck with the most perfect gentility of her appearance. On the other hand her neighbour who is over tall, is as careful on her part, to have the flattest heels that can be wore, and is equally industrious in decking to the best advantage the whole of her extravagant height.

Nor hath their neighbour who is affected with a dun and yellow skin, less trouble and anxiety of mind, besides her great toil of body. The waste she makes of wash-balls, and the best recommended cosmetics, together with her own, and her servants labour, in endeavouring to rub off the native tinct, is not to be conceived. But alas! it is labour in vain. All the comfort which remains for her, is derived from a black necklace assisted by two or three well disposed patches, which she hopes may in some measure over-cloud the hated yellowness of the adjacent parts.

So absolutely foolish are they, that I have some subjects who say, "Ah me, why were my ankles made so strong and fleshy? O that they had been slender and genteel, then I should not have been thus dependent on the mantua-maker for a covering for them." However gentlemen, were it not a rule established among the fair sex, that ankles somewhat gross are altogether ungenteel, it would puzzle a philosopher to determine how it is that small feet and slender ankles, come to have

more virtue and real worth in them, than those that are otherwise. But certainly it is deemed to be so, and those imperious dames, who have been favoured to their liking, do what they can to mortify those who are less happy in their pedestals. Against this disease there is no effectual remedy. Small sized shoes formerly gave them great hopes of relief, but alas ! they generally made cripples of their wearers.

INF. I have always observed, that when people have applied to the artist, to have that mended which they think the Almighty hath marred, the punishment is connected with the crime as a token of the just resentment of a jealous God, who hath left none of his works imperfect ; and who would have them all, as indeed they ought to be, well esteemed. Hence come corns upon the feet, and far greater unevenness in the symmetry of the body, than was before their application to the mechanic.

FAST. Another of my disciplesses has got hair of a madder red, and such is her folly, that it grieves her beyond measure. But with all my wisdom I could never find out the reason, why red hair should be any more scandalous, than yellow or flaxen locks : or how it is, that scarlet is held to be such a courtly colour upon broadcloth, and yet so scandalous for a lady to have her head of a scarlet colour. But the lady herself is so apprehensive of the scandal, that she is obliged to exchange her native locks,

with a neighbouring barber, for a set of flaxen false curls? these she flatters herself will very well become the native fairness of her skin.

Perhaps indeed, to spare the natural crop, she may blind the eyes of beholders with powder, which may help to conceal the awful secret. The like expedient is used by women of a coquetish disposition, when to their great grief and inconsolable sorrow they first perceive old age dying a whiteness upon their temples. In order to prevent the world having any suspicion that she is advanced in years, the coquet procures a defence against the appearance of hoary hairs, and thus she keeps herself as much as possible, from the belief that she is growing old, till the detested wrinkles on her forehead betray the fatal secret, and then she declines faster than other women, because her grief gives swiftness to her decay. Another lady is exceedingly grieved every time she looks in her glass, because as she thinks, her face is too much upon the fire to be deemed lovely; but she comforts herself with the reflection that she hath good features, and the great artist, when he finished her has left a dimple in her chin. On the other hand, her cousin beholds a system of agreeable features in her own countenance: but oh! the dejection of her heart, on recollecting the paleness of her lips. To supply the defects of nature in this, before she goes abroad she has recourse to her pencil and vermillion shell. Thus she has some means of comfort

within her power, but her poor sister who is seamed with the smallpox, is quite inconsolable. If at any time she expresses satisfaction, it is in speaking of the former agreeableness of her features, and fairness of her skin. But alas! her joy is presently clouded with the melancholy consideration they are for ever gone. Some ladies are highly offended because their hands are so big, others that their fingers are too short; and now and then you may meet with one, who is dreadfully tormented underneath a king Richard back; which is sure to prove an intolerable burden, all the life of the unhappy woman.

INFID. Nothing more fully demonstrates our dominion in the hearts of mankind, than their being ashamed of their shapes and physiognomy; the supposed deformity of which, they could by no means have prevented. Every degree of this kind of shame, is a tacit reproach of the Creator, and therefore daringly impious. Many you may find, ashamed of the innocent defects of their outward frame, who are not in the least ashamed of their vain lives and immoral conversations; to rectify which ought to be their principal concern. And were there but as much pains taken to rectify the disorders of civil life, as there are to hide the supposed defects and redundancies of the body, and to alter the tincture of the skin, the world would be very different from what it is. But you take care to prevent that Impiator,

DIS. One who has made mankind no part of his study, would deem it impossible for rational beings to be ashamed of and concerned for innocent deformities of the body, - with which no person of common sense will ever upbraid them, and which never can by any means lessen the esteem of the judicious (for who can make that straight which the Almighty hath made crooked, or white which he hath made brown?) and at the same time neglect the infinitely more valuable mind.

INF. By your account sir, your vassals have got a wrong notion of beauty, as by our long observation it appears, we may sometimes see a great deal of beauty in a person whose bodily parts no way tend to recommend him. Real beauty lies in the constitution of the mind and the proper use of its intellectual faculties: every thing else compared with this is like tinsel when compared with the purest gold.

That person appears truly amiable without external comeliness, who can bear the lack of it with a becoming grace: and who to make up for all outward defects, is studious to embellish the immortal mind. That is a part of man always capable of improvement; but for the body they may fret, murmur, and repine at its defects as much as they will, they plainly see it does not mend the matter, for who by taking thought can add one cubit to his stature, or make one hair whiter or blacker?

FAST. Such is my dominion now, nor was

it less in the more early ages. I made rude work in the tents of Jacob between his two wives and among his sons; and by those means I greatly disturbed them whom I could not destroy.

INVIDIO. I have till now been silent, but beg leave to observe, that I think our labour is far from being lost. Seeing, though we are permitted to destroy none who are good and virtuous, we have the pleasure of distressing and distracting them. And certainly no music can be so agreeable to our ears as the sighs and groans of our enemies. There is something so agreeable in the destruction of infidels and distracting the rest of mankind, that I have often heard our father Belzebub say, he would rather aggravate his own torment a thousand degrees than be robbed of that pleasure. His and our happiness lies chiefly in distressing mankind, especially the virtuous and good, notwithstanding he overheard Immanuel when he said "I give unto them eternal life, and none shall pluck them out of my hands."

AVAR. One would wonder it did not wholly discourage him, from making further attempts against such people, especially if what I have heard is true; I mean that every affliction which they endure by his means, will be an aggravation to his own misery; but his hatred against them is implacable.

FAST. It is not altogether his hatred and malice against them, which excite him to per-

secute them with such unwearied diligence : but it happened on a time, that Belzebub was by, when one of his heavenly heralds declared “ That in all the afflictions of his people Immanuel himself is afflicted.” And at another time he heard another say “ That Immanuel is touched with a sense of human infirmities ;” nay then said he to himself, they shall not want for afflictions if I should endure a thousand hells. It will be a heaven of delight to me, to see my fiery darts bound off from the persons to whom they are shot, and strike him whom I have in the most perfect abhorrence. So that it is Immanuel himself rather than those who believe in him, at whom Satan is so much enraged.

To return to my story—By my means the knot of sisterhood between Rachel and Leah was united, friendship and love fled to a distance far remote from their tents. But this was not the finishing stroke of my artifice, for when one generation passed away, you might always be sure to find me with those, who made their appearance next upon the stage of action. Hence I was found with the sons of Jacob, and made them perpetrate deeds very unworthy of the patriarchal character, and that even in the life-time of their father. The destruction of the Hivites by the sword of Simeon and Levi, in revenge of Shechem’s rape on their sister Dinah, was wholly by my instigation. They grieved and that justly, but

pride alone called up the demons of revenge and cruelty, who drenched themselves in Canaanitish blood.

When Joseph dreamed of his future advancement, I prevailed with his brethren to hate him, and give admission to every baleful demon; under whose influence, even at the hazard of their father's life, they sold him into Egypt. There I stirred up Sabrina, the wife of Potiphar, to revenge her slighted charms upon him; Joseph himself to swear by the life of Pharaoh, and to carry it very strangely to his brethren in the time of their affliction, notwithstanding he himself had seen such wonders of divine providence, as mentioned by the writer of his life. Just it was that his brethren should have been afflicted for their former perfidy and baseness, but Joseph could never have been persuaded to be instrumental therein, but by my instigation.

IMP. I am surprized sir, you should select the history of those reputed the best of men, for exemplifying your dominion: whereas you make no mention of Ham, Ishmael, Esau, &c. I thought, your dominion over them was more full than over the other.

FAST. I mention the best on purpose to save myself trouble cousin. For when you hear of my power over them, you will easily conceive that my dominion over the rest of mankind must be absolute. I might indeed do myself honor, by telling you of the part I had in the

lewdness of Ham, the despite of Ishmael, Esau's revenge, &c. &c. but as I understand it all implied in the present plan of my narrative. Indeed it would be endless to tell you of even a thousandth part of my achievements; and I am persuaded it is more agreeable to you to hear of my occasional prevalence over the virtuous, than to have a full display of my uninterrupted dominion, over the infidel part of mankind without it.

Yet it may not be amiss by way of specimen, to give you one instance of my influence over Infidels in general. Amongst the millions I might adduce, I shall refer you to Basuris Pharaoh king of Egypt, in the days of Moses and Aaron. Notwithstanding the mighty signs and wonders which God wrought by the hand of his Hebrew servants, he was so absolutely under my dominion, that he hardened himself against the Almighty, disregarded the voice of his prophets, and would not suffer the people to go into the wilderness to worship. Moses and Aaron wrought works unprecedented, in the presence of the king and his nobles; but I persuaded him that the whole was effected by the power of magic, and that Jannes and Jambres his own enchanters, could do the same were they called to it.

I had got such possession of his heart before any miracles were wrought, that he thought himself inferior to no being whatever, and scorned subjection even to the Almighty.

Pharaoh's magicians in divers instances, by a divine permission, imitating the wonders wrought by Moses and Aaron; he persuaded himself that he was at least equal to that God who sent them, and in the most haughty disdain he said, "Who is the Lord that I should obey him?"

You have all heard that no man hath hardened himself against God at any time, and hath prospered: nor did he prosper. I hardened his heart against every divine injunction till the God of the Hebrews utterly confounded the Memphian magicians, and made the haughty monarch not only willing to let the people go, but eager to trust them out of the land. However they had not travelled very far, before Pharaoh being a little recovered from his consternation, was induced by me to pursue and oblige them to return to their drudgery, alleging the great loss which both his majesty and the Egyptian monarchy would sustain, by the departure of such a number of vigorous slaves. Pursuant to this purpose he mustered his chariots and horsemen, all the Egyptian chivalry, pursued the fugitives, by dint of sword to compel them to return to their spades and wheelbarrows. Every one must praise my noble intentions, for I designed that both hosts should have perished, the one by the sword of the Egyptians, and the other by the thunderbolts of heaven. I conjectured upon good ground, that if Pharaoh destroyed

the Hebrews, the Almighty would avenge their blood upon him and his kingdom.

The hosts of Pharaoh overtook the Hebrews near Pi-ha-hiroth, where the raging ocean met them in the front, and a vast ridge of impassible mountains enclosed them on either hand: "Glory be on me, cried the exulting monarch, see how my happy stars have hemmed in the fugitives. Now shall they either return to their servitude, or perish on the points of Egyptian swords; and Pharaoh shall no more be upbraided with a God greater than himself." But Pharaoh's boastings were premature, his hopes were blasted before they were full blown; for it came to pass, that the Almighty took the cause of his people into his own hand, wrought salvation for them, and with an high hand destroyed him and all the Egyptian chivalry.

Business calls me hence gentlemen, I hold it good that we adjourn till to-morrow.

DIALOGUE XIII.

Avaro.

INDEED gentlemen, what I tell you is true; you cannot conceive how much I am caressed by the grovelling slaves.

FAST. Do not boast cousin, nor let it once enter your mind, that your reception amongst mankind is more cordial and hearty than mine, for where there is one person who prostitute himself to the devil Avaro, there are at least twenty who fall down at the shrine of the adored Fastosus; though I will still own, your craftiness has subdued not a few to your grovelling sway.

AVAR. Not a few indeed! every nation furnisheth its quota to make up the number of my abject slaves, who adore me under feigned names suitably adapted to the genius of each country. For instance, in Holland, I am called Mynheer Industry; in France, Monsieur Prudence; in Spain, I bear the name of Don Diligence; in Austria and Russia, as also at the Hague, I am known by the name of Good Policy; and in Great-Britain and her colonies, I am called Mister Care, alias Mister Frugality,

but my true name being rightly translated will read Covetousness.

Great advantages arise to us from the concealment of our proper names. The word covetousness you know is of such a true brim-stone colour, that unless I had some method of disguising it, I could get but few adorers in comparison of what I have. There are thousands who delight to keep me under their roofs by the feigned names of Industry and Frugality, who would be afraid to be seen in my company under the name of Covetousness. They rise up early, sit up late, they eat the bread of carefulness, can never get enough of work done by their servants and labourers ; they buy as cheap and sell as dear as they can, and are for ever concerting schemes of money-getting, and yet they are not covetous ; all the world could not persuade them that they are the worshippers of the devil Avaro. Even those whose morning and evening desires run in the following strain, “ What shall I do to get money ? How shall I manage to keep what I have got out of the reach of pilfering rogues ? ” Such are their desires, and yet they are not covetous ; notwithstanding their increase, they cannot with pleasure assist the needy, unless by so doing they can serve themselves, and yet they are not covetous. Such people are very apt to consider gain as a proof of their godliness, and it is difficult for them to believe a poor man to be honest ; if his honesty is so clear that they

cannot deny it, they will tacitly charge him with either indolence or want of economy, as they take it for granted, any man may prosper in the world if he will—and yet they are not covetous.

INF. Your disciples Avaro, it seems, have but little acquaintance with that divine providence which we are constrained to confess, that providence which emptieth the storehouse of one and fills that of another, according to the dictates of unerring wisdom. But by long observation we have learned, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, but to whomsoever the arbiter of the universe is pleased to give the blessing. What most surprizeth me, is to see so many of your people among the professors of religion; do you think they have never heard that those who love the world have not the love of the father in them, and that friendship with the world is enmity against God? Or do they suppose themselves capable of serving both God and mammon?

AVAR. With your leave sir, such texts of scripture are of no weight with our people. Some consider them as interpolations, others as mistranslated, others still deem them erroneous, therefore not to be regarded; and all agree, that the force of such passages ought to be reasoned away. Yes brother fiends you may meet with many, who if their mental sentiments may be known by their outward con-

duct, believe themselves capable enough of serving both God and mammon, and that it is very consistent to love both God and the world at the same time. All the week round they are so earnestly engaged in pursuing worldly advantages, that one would suppose they have got an assurance that for one thousand years, at least, to enter upon, their souls shall not be required of them ; or indeed one would think they believe not a syllable of the Bible, or that there is either God or devil, heaven or hell. Yea, so ardent is their chase after gold, they cannot spare so much time as to ask their servants whether they intend for heaven or hell at death ? Whether they serve God or the devil ? Whether they read the Bible, or idle plays and novels ? Whether they go to church or alehouse on a Sunday, or indeed, whether they are Pagans or Christians, papists or Protestants ? And yet they are good Christians themselves, members of churches, and worshippers of the God of heaven.

Notwithstanding their fervent zeal for, and unwearied diligence in the service of mammon, they will not absent themselves from church on a Sabbath day on any consideration ; but with all sincerity imaginable, with the devotion of one holiday they wipe off the stains of the former six, and on Monday come forth as fresh for the avaricious chase as ever. Thus you see, my subjects by their conduct plainly tell you, they believe it very possible to serve both

God and mammon, and thus they give the lie to divine testimony.

It is now as it always was ; many people follow religion with the same views with those of the loaf and fish followers ; they take up religion to procure a character among men, that it may serve as a cloak for their mercenary purposes. The person deemed religious, being capable of executing avaricious schemes with greater facility and advantage, than the man who is known to be an enemy to all religion.

FAST. It seems, Avaro, your money hunters can adapt religion or any thing to the great end of getting. I know thousands who would not attend the worship of God at all, if they found not their account in it. I have laughed many times, at seeing the atheist and the deist come to church and receive the sacrament, to qualify them for places of public concern. It may safely be supposed, that men who believe not the sacrament to be of divine institution, have some ends, no way religious, to answer by their receiving it. It is not a little droll too, to see many who for conscience sake dissent from the Church of England, when they have the prospect of preferment, come cordially to the altar and receive the consecrated elements from the parish priest. Mortal man could not do more to secure all the emoluments of both church and state to their own party for ever, than the authors of the Test

act did, and yet many dissenters play the devil in cheating them. It must be a close hedge indeed, in which some people will not find a hole to creep through.

IMP. Ay, uncle, and it is every whit as droll to see many of my subjects, who never attend at church except upon those occasions ; men who spend their whole time in drinking, gaming, and whoring, admitted to the table of the Lord, to serve a turn in politics, contrary to every rule divine and human ; and yet those men commence the pillars and governors of the church, without coming near its assemblies on other occasions. These things make amazingly for our interest.

INF. Not many days since, your son Discordans gave us a most agreeable account of some of his operations, by the instrumentality of Prejudice and False-Reasoning ; I should be glad, my nephew, if you will be pleased to go on with your story.

DIS. I have no objection sir, if my honored parent will be pleased to permit. But Discordans cannot so much as breathe, without the instigation of great Fastosus.

FAST. You do me great honor my son, and have my permission to proceed ; but as I have urgent business in hand, and am already acquainted with your story, I shall leave you for the present, and meet you here to-morrow. Darkness and confusion attend you all.

DIS. This same glass, False-Reasoning, is

the mirror in which the Jewish clergy, doctors of law, scribes, and pharisees, tried the doctrines and actions of Immanuel and all his followers. By these means they were fatally deceived, and led to reject the council of God against themselves ; yea, hardened to that degree, as to say, the light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world, is absolutely darkness, and to charge the maker of all things with being a magician ; even to put forth their sanguinary hands, and murder the Lord of life.

You may think I was closely employed in those days, as there was not a pharisee in the whole world, whom I had not furnished with an inverting mirror and telescope. By these means they became quite enamoured with their own supposed virtue, and held all besides themselves to be accursed ; that is to say, heretics, because they know not the law, i. e. they did not measure length and breadth, exactly according to the standard of orthodoxy, which in all ages has been the traditions of the elders, and not the scriptures of truth, as some have erroneously asserted.

IMP. Hold cousin, there I think you must be wrong, for I myself am went to hear Immanuel, (who you know could not lie) refer his hearers to the scripture for the resolution of all doubts.

DIS. That is nothing at all to the purpose, cousin. I readily grant, and none can honest-

ly deny it, that the scripture is the standard of truth; but truth and orthodoxy are two things, very different, and sometimes diametrically opposite to one another. Bible doctrine is the same in all ages and nations, but orthodoxy in one nation differs at least as much from orthodoxy in another nation, as the several climates do from one another. To go no farther than Britain, you see what is south of the Tweed accounted the purest religion in the world, is, upon travelling farther towards the pole, deemed corrupt, superstitious, and anti-christian. So it is *vice versa*. Moreover, what has been orthodox and apostolic in one age, has had the misfortune to become quite heterodox and damnable in the next: so that there is no certain standard of orthodoxy in any nation; but truth is always the same and knows no standard but one.

Indeed the synod of Dort, and the reformers of the English church, have done what mortal men could do to fix an everlasting standard of orthodoxy, by tying all future professors to subscribe their traditions. But even that is insufficient. For by the help of mental reservation many subscribe contrary to their real belief: and others who have not that address, even go without a benefice, let them believe the Bible ever so piously. Yea, I have known many deemed heretics, and burned at a stake, merely for believing the Bible. Orthodox papists, orthodox episcopalians, orthodox pres-

byterians, and orthodox congregationalists, have all had the honor of putting to death for their want of orthodoxy; namely, because they were daring enough to think for themselves, contrary to the known maxims of the orthodox priests in every age. You know it is observable, that the orthodox are condescending enough to suffer other people to have thought for them.

IMP. What cousin! has any sect of Christians, besides our friends the papists, been found to persecute those who differed from them?

DISC. Yes cousin, every sect who has at any time been happy enough to grasp the reins of government for the time being. The worthy papists bore the bell of orthodoxy for the space of twelve hundred and sixty years, during which time much blood was shed by open massacres, secret assassinations, pretended judicatures, acts of bloody faith; and at last to finish the bloody reign of antichrist, England, France, the Netherlands, and the valleys of Piedmont swam with the gore of such who would believe the Bible sooner than the voice of the priests. Queen Mary's reign furnished the orthodox in her day, with a fine opportunity of discovering their zeal for the church, by murdering those who believed and obeyed the Bible; but her reign being short, and Elizabeth ascending the throne upon her demise, the other scale rose uppermost, and the

protestants in their turn became orthodox ; i. e. got the government into their hands.

O the violence of reputed orthodoxy ! Those same gentlemen were no sooner emerged from prison than they also let the world know that they were not to be differed from with impunity ; that the formula of their faith and worship, must be regarded with as implicit obedience as that in the former reign imposed by the papists. Now the Presbyterians, Independents, and other congregationalists felt the weight of their rage, or if you please zeal for orthodoxy, and the good of the church. Now the prison-keepers and their friend Master Ketch, had pretty near as good a run of trade as in the reign of Mary. And now the wilds of America began to be well peopled with English protestants and oppressed dissenters ; and the good episcopalians at home, kept the fleece to themselves and had all the good of the church before them. But those said Presbyterians and Independents had no sooner crossed the ocean for conscience sake, and found themselves secure from episcopal rage, than they themselves commenced orthodox, and set up their own formula as the standard of religion, to which they required as implicit submission from others as the good bishops of England had ere while done from themselves ; and now the poor antipedo-baptists and quakers were taught, that a mittimus is a mittimus whether it is signed by a papist, an episcopalian,

or a presbyterian? and that sentence of death is to be dreaded as much from the mouth of the latter as of the former. Those same dissenters who had so lately found Old England too hot for themselves, by the glowings of priestly zeal for orthodoxy, soon made New England too hot for the poor quakers and antipedo-baptists; who to escape the rage for presbytery fled; the one to Pennsylvania and the other to Rhode Island, that they might not be compelled to worship God according to other people's consciences and contrary to their own.

INF. So then the old spirit of calling down fire from heaven upon heretics, or those who walk in a different way, it seems has prevailed in modern times as well as of yore. O what a mask is that! human rage in the character of godly zeal? It is wonderful to see people glorifying the prince of liberty, by shutting their brethren up in a dungeon for conscience sake! worshipping the Saviour of men's lives by putting people to death, because they will worship him in a different form; and it is as wonderful that the ambassadors of peace (as they call themselves) should be the principal agents of this violence.

DIS. But for the ambassadors, persecution had never been known in the world, sir. The laity have so little zeal for God, that they would, if not instigated by the clergy, suffer men to worship him according to the best under-

standing they have of his mind revealed in the Bible. But the ambassadors are quite of another opinion ; for by them it is determined, that God should be worshipped in the very mode by them directed, or he shall not be worshipped at all if they can help it. The honor of persecution, alias punishing of heretics, must all be ascribed to the reverend ambassadors.

IMP. By ambassadors, I suppose, cousin, you mean popish priests, in contradistinction from protestant ministers.

DIS. I mean both papists and protestants, cousin ; and with me it is not very easy to determine which best deserve the honorable appellation.

But to return to my story. I taught the respectable Pharisees in general the use of my instruments, which as you saw in the late experiment, perfectly inverteth every object ; and so, by my prudent management, those very people, held to be the most religious of the Jews, were brought up to such a degree of self-conceit, as to fit them for executing the will of the devil ; still supposing that they were doing good service to the God of Israel. Contemplated under the reflection of my ingenious instruments, those Pharisees, who were darkness itself, considered themselves as angels of light, and each became so enamoured of his own personal excellence, that all who were not of their sect and persuasion, were held in

the most consummate abhorrence ; as accursed and ignorant of their traditions ; yea, even enemies to the Almighty.

They viewed Immanuel, the brightness of the Father's glory, and express image of his perfection, by the help of my glasses, in which, to them, he appeared as one come from Belzebub, and performing miracles in the spirit and power of the great apostate. His immediate disciples were indeed, men of whom the world was not worthy, yet viewed by the help of these notable instruments, they appeared as creatures the most despicable. Although men of peaceful principles, willing to spend, and be spent for the good of mankind, they were held to be enemies to the public good ; men who turned the world upside down : unworthy of a dwelling in the tents of humanity, and therefore thrust out of the world with violence. Such wonderful works were accomplished of old, by the help of these amazing instruments, and still they are as ever perfect, and fit for operation.

Even at this day, when the whole system of revealed truth is examined by my inverting mirror, it is misapprehended as cunningly devised fables ; a well concerted system of falsehood ; or a priestly imposition on the consciences and understanding of the laity. Yes, my fellow destroyers, by my wise government, many who value themselves as the greatest masters of reason, are so absolutely stupid as

to suppose that the eternal God has left men at large, without any given law or revelation of his mind, to which their submission is required. Being thus stupidly absurd, you will not wonder, that the same masters of reason have been ingenious enough to find out, that this world, unwieldy as it is, was dextrous enough to create itself, and possesseth wisdom enough to be its own governor.

INF. By your leave, cousin. This last part of your account belongs to my administration. You preside only over dissention and division. I want to hear some of your operations of this kind.

DIS. True, sir. But if I preside over dissents, divisions, animosities, &c. you know I must be allowed to use proper means, by which my works are to be propagated; for I am not like those human fools, who expect the end without using the means. Besides, sir, that one devil should assist another, is by no means against the laws of our fraternity. If I, to promote my beloved Discord, call in the assistance of your bewildering influences; I also in a kind return, by the divisions which I foment, greatly strengthen the slavish bands of great Infidelity. Our interest being mutual, I hope the worthy Infidelis will never grumble to lend me all possible assistance, in striving to make this earth, as much as may be, to resemble the regions of the damned. Moreover, our great prince and parent is no way careful, a-

about which of his illustrious family is the instrument in damning a soul, so that the work of damnation is effected.

INF. I have no objection cousin, to assisting you, or any of our kindred. All I desire is, to have due notice taken of my influence. Our leading view ought undoubtedly to be the destruction of men, in compliance with the will of our great ancestor. But I detain you.

DIS. The ancient pharisees were not the only dupes I have had in the world. The great man at Rome, the father of the world, and head of the church of antichrist, has been as much my dupe as people of less eminence, as I shall shew you in the sequel.

INFID. What, cousin, have you become acquainted with my old friend? I should like to know how that came to pass, and what acquaintance you have with him.

DISC. I accomplished it in the following manner. I presented his supreme holiness, with a pair of my instruments, of the right luciferian construction, on purpose that he might by their assistance, try all the bulls he should publish, and all the causes which should come before him. For it ought to be observed, the time was, when the whole world wondered after his infallible judgment. Infalilble, so given out, and so for many ages received. Yea, so powerful, so efficacious has been the word of his holiness, that ere now his very breath has blown the crown off from the head of one

prince, upon that of another. So very extensive his sovereign sway, that to give a kingdom to a devoted friend, was no more to him, than to give a snuff of sneezing would be to a trusty highlander.

From the use of my instruments, there arises a necessity that his holiness's bulls, &c. should be the most perfect antichristianism ; so that in the inverting mirror they may assume the likeness of unerring truth. It is the same with the persons and things which the hoary father is concerned with ; the sentence is in general, contrary to the real intrinsic merit of the party or cause. Hence we find a turbulent Becket canonized for a saint, and placed among the Roman deities ; and a pious Cranmer condemned to the stake. Regicide is rewarded as meritorious, whilst walking according to the dictates of conscience is held altogether damnable, both in this and the future world.

From the proper application of this mirror, popish bulls, decrees of councils, canons of churches, human composed formula's of worship, are supposed to be stamped with divine authority ; whilst the Bible, that only revelation of the divine mind, is considered, not only as insufficient to shew to men the way of salvation, but even dangerous to be read by the laity. And is absolutely forbidden their use, lest by knowing too much of the will of God, they should perish from the popish faith : so the

good old vicar obliges the laity to go to hell blindfolded without complaining.

Nothing can be more certain, than that either his holiness the pope, or the writers of the scriptures, must be mistaken. The former says, the Bible is dark, mysterious, difficult to be understood, and even dangerous to the souls of men ; whereas the latter say, the scripture way of salvation is so plain and easy, that the wayfaring man though a stranger, though even a fool, shall not err therein. The pope has for weighty reasons been pleased to forbid the use of the scriptures, under the heavy penalty of death and damnation ; Jesus the author of the Bible, commands all men to search the scriptures ; and his spirit in Paul, applauds this conduct in the noble Bereans. Surely this points out the very person of antichrist. His holiness at Rome, and all other great leaders of the church, are of opinion that the scripture is not of itself sufficient to be the guide of conscience, the rule of faith and practice, therefore canons, creeds, liturgies, &c. are introduced to make the formula of worship more complete. But Paul the apostle tells mankind, that, the scripture is able through God to make them wise to salvation. So that the one or the other must needs be mistaken.

IMP. His holiness of Rome, was in the right to forbid reading of the Bible, and they find their account in so doing. The old Bible, I am told, tolerates even a gospel minister to

lead about a wife, but confines him to one only. Therefore this Bible did not suit my good friends of the priesthood. But the pope's bible which forbids to marry, and enjoins an unreserved auricular confession, gives the gentlemen of the cloth an opportunity, under the pretence of being righteous more than others, of being lascivious to the uttermost, and to defile all the nuns in the convent. What full fed friar would not choose a free admission into such a seraglio, rather than be confined by sacred marriage, to one only wife? With them it is a rule that much pleasure arises from variety.

DIS. So cousin, I find you are acquainted with our old friends the priests of Rome.

IMP. I have been long acquainted with them. Why cousin, the greatest part of them dwell in my canton of literal fornicators, and they are all freemen in the district of mystical whoredom.

DIS. I have taken care to furnish every true member of the Italian church, with a partial telescope, by the help of which he takes a false view of the members, of all other communities whatever; and in the very spirit of the ancient pharisees, holds all to be accursed who are not of his communion. By these means also, the holiness of real saints is called heresy, and the heresy of the papists obtains the name of holiness. The will-worship, superstition, and idolatry of those sons of the mystic whore, they all piety, whilst the pure spiritual, worship of

God in Christ is by them termed schism and heresy.

In my instruments the papists, in general, view the righteousness of Immanuel, as the ground of man's acceptance with God, and therefore say they, "It is all chimera, a mere shadow, a doctrine of licentious tendency, unfit to be published amongst mankind." But when they consider their own personal merit by the help of my telescope, they are ravished with their own supposed excellency. "A righteousness of our own," say they "is a work of substance, and will bear our dependance. Here is righteousness of my own working out, enough to obtain the favour of God, and to spare. Blessed be my own hands for working out my salvation, and more than my salvation. Adored be my own heart for possessing more than holiness sufficient to bring me to heaven." Of the same opinion is the Rev. Mr John Wesley, with whom it is plain, that the grace of God is insufficient to salvation, without the co-operation of the creature; who yet is confessedly incapable of doing any thing aright. There is a very near relation between the old gentleman at Rome, and his kinsman at the Foundry. Both are popes, though the latter is much more diminutive than the former.

There was a time when the whole assemblage of priests, took it into their heads to promote their own religion, and to suppress that which had any tendency to lessen the import-

ance of the sacerdotal order. For their more success they enquired of my mirror as an oracle, for direction as to means most proper for the purpose. Answer was given, "By the power of the sword." Therefore in the popish bible it is written, "Those who in contempt of holy church, shall take upon them to live according to the dictates of conscience and scripture, shall die the death, and their estates shall be confiscated to the prince of the realm, provided always that one full moiety of every such estate, shall without deduction be returned to his holiness at Rome, the prince over the kings of the earth. Moreover, whoever shall hesitate about yielding his conscience to the guidance of the priest, and shall not with apparent willingness bind his soul to the horns of the pontifical altar, shall be deemed and damned for an heretic; that is, shall be burned out of this world at a stake, and shall burn for ever in the world to come, according to the good pleasure of his merciful holiness."

INF. Ah cousin, the devil was sadly outwitted in that affair; for although the burning of heretics, was a pleasing diversion to our good friends the priests for the time being, it has brought them into contempt which will prove everlasting. Having set the world upon reflection, it is now found to our grief that the religion of Jesus has no connection with a spirit of intolerance, which, wherever it obtains is known to be the spirit of antichrist. One would

really suppose, that the successor of St Peter has quite forgotten the injunction given his predecessor, to cease from the use of the sword and let it abide in its sheath, seeing he accounts its edge to be the most convincing of all arguments. But I interrupt your story, cousin.

DIS. Often have I seen the whimsical hermit and fantastical devotee, take an ample view of his own religious proceedings, with this partial telescope and inverting mirror, and thus sounds the voice of self-applause from the hermetical cell at the bottom of Sinai, or on the top of Ararat. "Lo, what an high degree of holiness my own self-denial and assiduity have procured me. Behold! what great good my crucifixion of the flesh, and separation from the world have wrought out for me; for which I may thank my own resolution. By my pious diligence I have attained holiness sufficient to qualify me for, and good works more than enough to entitle me to heaven. Happy I, who have made such a good improvement of my time! Unlike to those indolent people who, when they die, are obliged either to purchase their pardons at an advanced price, or to lie for ages in the flames of purgatory, burning away their rebellions. I shall get safe to heaven without so much as touching at that flaming prison on my journey."

IMP. Dear cousin, how I have laughed; laughed myself out of breath, strong and heal-

thy as my lungs are, to see the papal penitent after he has in holy zeal whipt himself with the cat-o'-nine-tails, for the length of several streets; till the impious offending gore has laid on the stones. Enamoured with his own fortitude in so belabouring the sinful flesh, I have seen him after his penitential work was finished, examine every stripe by the help of my valuable instruments, and as he viewed he cried with the voice of exultation, " Ah how infatuated are those who hope to get to heaven in a whole skin; without mortifying and punishing the wicked flesh? To expose themselves to such severe exercises in the discipline of purgatory, for want of devotion enough to submit to the discipline of the church; how impious? But I shall have a speedy entrance into happiness on my dissolution; for I mortify the members of this body, and these wounds religiously inflicted voluntarily by my own hand, will be as so many mouths to intercede for me with the Almighty."

AVAR. So then, cousin, the intercession of Immanuel is quite out of the question, with your penitents, I perceive. And indeed those people who can whip themselves to heaven, cannot have much need of his advocacy and intercession. If the whip well applied can save a man from destruction, one would be apt to conclude, that Immanuel might have saved himself the expence of such bloody sufferings and agonizing sorrows as he underwent.

DIS. That is true cousin ; but their first concern is not with Immanuel but his holiness the pope. Not about the favour of God, but that of his reverence the priest, who is thought to have all the orators of heaven under his influence. Therefore, those that hope for favour with the inhabitants of heaven, must be very careful not to lose the good graces of the parson ; for it is thought, that no man can meet with a cordial reception in the other world, but what brings proper credentials with him from the ghostly guide of his conscience in this. But death is a wonderful instructor, and teaches the poor beguiled criminals, lessons which they never thought of in life ; and amongst others, this important one, " That the favour of the pope and priest can be no more service to a dying man, than the favour of Mahomet.

INF. When the true born sons of the scarlet whore, are pleased to view the protestants with my telescope, indignation rises in the heart ; and thus they give vent to their zeal and vengeance, " Ah what a goodly heaven would it be to see those heretics broiling in the flames of hell ; when shall vengeance fall to the uttermost upon those, who dare despise the authority of the church and its holy high priest ? "

INF. It is allowed on all hands in the church of Rome, that to protest against the pope's supremacy, and disbelieve his infallibility is the sin unpardonable ; for which no dis-

pensation whatever can be obtained from the clergy, however much their so doing may be approved in heaven. And it is an article of the papal faith, that fire and faggot, rack and gibbet, are the most convincing, or rather invincible of all arguments, therefore never to be omitted in the decision of religious disputes.

IMP. When we consider, sir, that his holiness of Rome is not such an able logician as Jesus of Nazareth, and hath a religion very different from his to defend ; we must allow that he is in the right of it to reason with the edge of the coercive weapon. Fraudulent religion is liable to many disadvantages which that of truth enjoys, and although the one will eternally stand of itself against all the machinations of darkness, the other will require the assistance of violence and intolerance to uphold it. Who then can blame their papal reverences for pulling the sword from its scabbard in order to convince gainsayers ? I have seen many by dint of sound reasoning most grievously confound the holy fathers, who became like dumb dogs that could not bark before them ; in a moment's time silenced by the end of a cord, or some other such irrefutable argument. These are wonderful ways of enlightening the consciences of heretics, gentlemen. But I pray you cousin, Discordan, have you no concern among the protestants ?

DIS. Not a little, cousin, which to-mor-

row I may give you some account of, but at present must forbear, the usual time of interview being elapsed. Adieu, my kinsmen, adieu.

DIALOGUE XIV.

Discordans.

YES, gentlemen, strange as it may seem, I assure you my advantages by these instruments are great, and my influence even over protestants not to be despised. Though it is true, I am at no pains to prejudice the protestants against the papists, or to make use of my instruments in order to render the latter more disagreeable than they really are. For whilst in the body, it is impossible to make a thorough bred papist more diabolical than he is already. I leave it therefore with the protestants to examine the worshippers of the pope, in the mirror of revealed truth, by which the antichristianism of that religion is sufficiently detected; and all the fallacy of priestcraft is brought to open light. But,

Great is the business which I do between one protestant and another; who altho' they unanimously agree to shake off the papal yoke, are most grievously divided among themselves. They abominate the high and arrogant pretensions of Rome; yet they themselves are severally the most orthodox, and drink deeper into the spirit of popery than they are perhaps a-

ware of, even of the precious spirit of intolerance and bigotry.

When a zealous churchman, such as Sacheverel, or his lordship of L——ff, or a Durell, Nowel, or Blackett, examines his own party with my telescope and mirror ; how enamoured is the good man on the discovery of his own excellency : how much of the self-opinionated strain flows from his boasting lips : “ There is no doubt, says he, but our church is truly apostolical ; the purest church in the whole world. We hold fast the form of sound words, and are not forgetful of the tradition of the elders.”

INF. No cousin, they are not forgetful of tradition, for with all the pompous parade of lordly prelates, there is not a small part of the episcopalian formula that derives its existence from the traditions of even the Romish fathers. Cringing and curtsying when the name of Jesus is pronounced ; worshipping with the face towards the east ; keeping of lent and other holidays, besides the Christian Sabbath ; fasting on Fridays ; crossing in baptism, with a great many more, are all sprung from the Italian fountain. In like manner the names of their priests evidently shew that the pope stood god-father at their christening. And he that but looks on their canonical robes, must be instantly convinced that they are cut in the true Italian taste. However, they are not the only protestants who hanker after papal customs, for

even the Geneva cloke itself discovers the taylor's acquaintance with the shops of Italy. And yet to hear the Calvinists boast of their reformation from popery, one would think we could not find so much as a shred of the strumpet's garments within the pale of their presbytery.

Dis. It is a rule with mankind in general, to look out narrowly for the mote in the eye of another, whilst they tenderly pass by the beam which is in their own eye ; and as we have brought the world into such a state of disorder, it is no difficult matter for the eye of jealousy to find faults enow. Sometimes I clap my telescope to the eye of a true son of the church, and direct him to survey the whole body of dissenters ; he obeys, and then exclaims, " These same roundheads are schismatics, prone to strife and sedition ; self-sufficient, turbulent, and uneasy bigots ! haters of apostolic discipline, and lovers of licentiousness, who therefore spit in the face of their mother, and wickedly leave the purest church in the world."

IMP. I pray you cousin, are there none apostolical besides the episcopalians ?

Dis. O yes, cousin Impiator ; all are apostolical, if their own testimony is to be credited ; all the Romish clergy are apostolical and give it out that Peter the fisher-man was their great-grandfather. The church of Scotland is also apostolical, and the power of the

twelve apostles is thought to have been transferred to the Scotch presbytery. The independents are apostolical also; on account of the soundness of their doctrine, and regularity of some part of their discipline. But both they and the north country clergymen labour under some disadvantages; for the latter have lost the deed of transfer, which conveyed the authority of the apostles unto the presbytery; and the former are unhappy enough to be unable to produce either precept or precedent from the apostles for infant sprinkling, which is notwithstanding a foundation doctrine, and by them accounted Christian baptism. The baptists, or as the independents and methodists respectfully call them anabaptists, you may be sure are not less apostolical than their neighbours, having, besides all the advantages claimed by the independents, the enjoyment of baptism according to the primitive institution. So that no defect whatever, in point of a gospel spirit, can hinder them from being apostolical.

Even Mr Wesley and his preachers give themselves out to be apostolical, notwithstanding Mr Wesley asserts that salvation is by works, which the apostle Paul denied. No contradiction whatever will hinder the teachers of the people from considering themselves as apostolical. When I am used to attend the Sandemanian church after service time, and divert myself with their playing at blindman's

buff, I confess I could not easily gather from what part of the apostles conduct they derived their warrant for this game; any more than for cards, skittles, attending plays and masquerades, going to Vauxhall, Ranelagh, &c. &c. and yet this is the only apostolic church in the world in its own esteem, taken in its proper connections. However it is said, some of the oldest pillars of the church having had their shins repeatedly broken, and the elders noses having been smitten even to bloodshed, they have laid aside that dangerous play of blind-man's buff, so very apostolical a few years ago, and have found out ways and means of becoming little children, less dangerous and more becoming their infant capacities, by which they may spend the evening of every Sabbath.

IMP. By your leave, cousin; I have often been puzzled to find out how it is the prelates of the church of England came to be apostolical, and I protest I cannot after all unriddle the mystery. I have heard my father say, that the apostles were never consecrated to any see whatever in England, and that there were not half the number of apostles there are of prelates even in this island. Moreover, I have heard him say, the archbishops and bishops of the English church are the successors of the arch-flamins and flamins, the dignitaries of the old British pagan church, prior to the days of Lucius. Now if they hold the honors and revenues of the pagan clergymen, how is it

that they are apostolical? Is it because the name is changed from flamin to bishop, or how?

Certain it is the English bishops must be of a more noble order than the apostles. They are lord bishops; they possess great revenues; they are clothed in soft raiment, and dwell in kings courts; they are too high, too polite, too dignified to preach in a common assembly, or indeed in any other more than twice or thrice a year. But the apostles were men of mean extraction, not Lords, not Right Reverends; plain Paul, Peter, James, &c. they were contented if their revenues would purchase food and raiment for them; they seldom appeared among great men, in kings courts, otherwise than in quality of prisoners; they were willing to spend and be spent, in preaching the gospel to all people, and on all occasions; they had no carriages, no equipages; they had nothing to glory of but their afflictions, which fell upon them in every place wherever they came.

INF. There is some weight in your reasoning, my son, and they will understand it hereafter. But in the mean while, it is not clever in the churchmen, however zealous, to charge the nonconformists with having separated from the church. The church of England in her rubric defines a church to be “a congregation of faithful men, where the word is preached, and the ordinances are administered;”

from whence it is plain, a church may meet in a house which has never a steeple; and a man may leave the house of parish worship, or what is called the parish church, and yet cleave to a congregation of faithful men and women, where the ordinances are administered and the word preached, which the rubric, as before observed, acknowledges to be the true church. Churches are built of living stones, which never a parish church nor cathedral in England is, therefore a departure from them can never with propriety be said to be a schism in the church. My good friend the high church man, is somewhat unkind to the nonconformists in this affair.

DIS. I allow it, sir. But I assure you the nonconformists perfectly understand the law of retaliation, and is an adept in the use of my instruments. In some zealous hour of self-approbation you may hear his thoughts about the episcopalians, "These episcopalians, says he, these mongrels, are monsters in religion, like Ephraim they are neither baked nor unbaked, but like a cake not turned; neither good protestants nor right papists. Partly they worship God, and partly they obey the pope. What consistency can there be in such a jumbled religion? Can there be any good, where there is so much papal dross and refuse? Any true religion, where there is so much false traditional superstition? Can there be any thing of the substance, where there is so much

of the shadow?" So you see there is never a sect of protestants, but will occasionally do the devil a kindness, in their treatment of one another.

INF. This language of the nonconformists is not general, cousin; for there are many of them who can believe that a person may really be saved, although even not of their community; and that all who differ from them, are not to be treated as absolutely enemies to God and all religion. The like may be said of the good people of the church of England, for amongst them you will find some who do not really think that every dissenter is absolutely in a state of damnation, and hope at least that a man may escape hell, even though he never sets his foot in the parish church. However, I have often been highly diverted at hearing the church parson on the one hand, railing against the neighbouring dissenters as worse than papists, instead of preaching the gospel; and on the other hand, the dissenter, with the greatest dexterity bandying back the curse upon his reverence, as a dog that barks at the sheep of Christ. Prejudice, cousin, deals all in extremes; it never touches on the middle path of judgment, the path reserved for the gentle steps of candour.

DIS. It is not enough that I persuade the more bigotted part of both conformists and nonconformists, reciprocally to consider each other as the avowed and incorrigible enemies

of Christianity, and themselves to be its warmest votaries. But I find means to procure the noncons a sight of each other in my celebrated telescope, and each to treat the different denominations with as much rigour and injustice, as if they were not followers or did not profess to be followers of one and the same Saviour. The hottest episcopal rage ever felt by their forefathers, discovered not more bigotry than what some of them discover against one another.

I was greatly edified the other day in paying a visit to an eminent quaker, who, when with curious eye he was examining my instruments, was moved by the spirit of self-conceit, to examine, try, cast and condemn all the sects of professors around him, as destitute of the inward power of religion, and thus having the telescope at his eye he began: "Friend Episcopalius, I perceive thou art so carried away with the form, that thou carest not for the power of religion. Vain man, shadows are thy delight, and thou little regardest the substance. Dost thou think, friend Episcopalius, that the spirit is in the service-book? Why dost not thee read friend Barclay's apology? Dost thou suppose that Christian ministers are ever to be seen shrouded in Romish weeds and surplices? How can thy steeple-house be a receptacle of the meek and peaceful saints, when there is such a clinking of bells from the top of it? Is it not more likely a synagogue of satan,

whose servants are turbulent and noisy? Thy ministers preach for hire friend, they take tithes and offerings from the people, and how can they then be ministers of Jesus Christ? I advise thee friend Episcopalius to consider thy ways, and turn to the light within thee, then thy priests will let one shirt at a time serve their turn, and will no longer preach for tithes and offerings. Then shalt thou thyself be led to renounce the fantasies of this vain life, and solicit neither for church nor state preferment, but wilt content thyself with getting money in a way of trade, like our self-denying brethren. I say again, vain man, consider how worldly are thy practices."

" As for you my friends of the presbyterian and independent denominations, I allow that ye do not conform to the corrected mass-book, for which some praise is due to you. But, alas! ye conform to the world notwithstanding. Look ye, friends, your women wear ribbons of unholy colours; rings of gold; polluted by the prophane hands of the silversmith; yea ruffles, furbelows, and heads frizzled up to an enormous height, of downright French prophaneness; your women are ladies, madams, and misses, all of which indicate that ye are destitute of the inward power, and neglect to look to the light within you. Yea, examine but your own clothes, ye who call yourselves gentlemen, and see what irreligion discovers itself in every part of their fabrication. Do you

see friends, your parsons wear clothes of an idolatrous black, and bands starched with superstition, after the manner of popish and episcopalian hirelings. Ye make ministers, sprinkle your infants, use ordinances, and like all other worldlings, are as much attached to shadows, as if the substance were not come ; yea, your clothes in general are made of unholy colours, such as are wore by the servants of the flesh ; ye wear buttons, made of metal digged out of the bowels of this sinful earth ; even pocket-holes impiously gaping in the fore-skirts of your upper garment ; and to add to the height of your carnality, your hats are wickedly cocked after the manner of the sons of antichrist. I charge you all, ye presbyterians and independents, to turn to the light within you, and that will lead you to the substance. Then will ye forsake all these lying and worldly vanities."

" As for thee, my friend Baptismus, (continued the serious quaker) thou art worse than all the rest ; they have fairly given up some of the ordinances which were in use in the apostles days, but thou retainest every punctilio ; in this therefore thou art formal and superstitious. By leading of people to submit to those primitive ordinances, thou dishonorest the light within thee, which teaches those who obey it to despise ordinances, as thou seest in the case of our brethren. Besides, thy clothes are of a dark colour, like those of other hire-

lings and men made preachers. Why dost thou not imitate our elders in wearing cloth of a religious colour, even of an holy drab? Observe me, friend, thy hat is cocked after a popish manner, and thou wearest a button and loop upon it, after the fashion of antichrist; why hast thou not hooks and eyes to raise it only to a half bend after the manner of the spiritual?

“ It appears but too plainly, friend Baptismus, that thou art still in the world. Thy preachers also wear popish cambric on their bosom, preach for hire, and assume the epithet of reverend. Thee and thy friends, make a mighty bustle about what thou callest the scripture. I pray thee, friend, turn thee from that dead letter, to the author of it within, so shalt thou be taught to contemn ordinances as we do, and to give honor to none of thy fellow-creatures, how much soever it may be due.

“ But thou, my friend Wesley, comest more near to the standard than any of thy neighbours; thy priests are not hirelings, having only food and raiment, and thou wisely takest care of the rest; neither are they of human manufacture, but are all like unto our elders, sent forth by special commission from heaven, from whence thou sayest that thou derivest thy own commission.

“ Thou preachest the free agency of man also, and shuttest none out from heaven, besides those who will not fulfil thy conditions,

or, as our elders say, refuse to obey the dictates of the true light within them. Nevertheless, thou fallest short of perfection, for though thou despisest the bishops as dumb dogs, thou art mightily taken with the steeple-house ; and although thou thyself wilt be subject to no ordinance but what thou thinkest meet, thou superstitiously bindest both thy preachers and people to the observance of every rite of what thou callest the church. I pray thee, friend John, why dost thou pinch thy belly on Fridays ? What seest thou in the fifth hour more than in the ninth, that thou shouldst set it apart for what thee callest devotion ? Why shouldst thou exhort thy preachers to read the scriptures with thy notes, to read thy other tracts, in preference to all others, to pray at certain hours, as if the spirit were at their command, and to preach twice every day of their lives ? Thou art too formal, friend, and regardest not duly the light within thee.

INF. And so your friend the quaker is pleased to tell all the world, that he is possest of the spirit of bigotry and self-conceit. However, he is not the only bigot in the world. Bigotry is an epidemical distemper among mankind, and I know no greater bigots than the people who profess to be the warmest votaries for unlimited charity. Who was ever more bigotted than friend Barclay and his quaking brethren ? Or who in the world is more bigoted and dogmatical at this day, than the rever-

end principal of the Foundry, that great votary for universal redemption, and the spontaneous agency of men. So very highly is this gentlemen esteemed by many of his people, that I have heard his labours extolled above those of Paul the apostle; and indeed himself accounted to be one of the two witnesses spoken of in the apocalypse. But in this they must be mistaken, unless by sackcloth in which the witnesses prophesied we are to understand prunella; for black prunella, instead of sack-cloth, has all the prophecies of Mr John been published.

DIS. My friend the quaker, having triumphantly surveyed the supposed imperfections of his neighbours, turned the telescope towards himself; then gathering his muscles into a smile of self-complacency, he said, "Yea, it is evident that I am a true follower of the light within, for I give honor to no man, how much soever it is due; prince and peasant, noble and ignoble, are all the same to me, my fellow-creatures and equals. In farther obedience to the inward light, I do not pray, not once in seven years, unless moved by an impulse from the spirit. My inward Bible I often read, but the dead letter of external scripture I leave to those who are fond of shadows. My raiment too is all made of an approved colour, even of sanctified drab; and my linen is plain, though fine and neatly drest. Yea, and Martha my good wife too, is separated from the

world, and is a suitable help-meet to a spiritual man; she wears no furbeloes, no prophane cardinals, capuchins, dominos, &c. but all her apparel is rich, good, and plain, becoming a separation from the world.

INF. With the quaker's good leave, I think the faults he finds in his neighbours, are but like gnats when compared to the huge camels, which to my certain knowledge he himself can swallow without straining. Besides the virtues of which he makes his boast, even supposing them to be virtues, are all external and are no more than tithes paid of annise, mint, and cummin, whilst the weightier matters of the law are neglected, perhaps even by this precision.

AVAR. I have often wondered what it is, that makes a drab colour more religious and becoming than another; yet certainly it must be so, for the quakers are wise, very wise, and could not be imposed on, as every tradesman who deals with them is ready to testify. Amongst my disciples, I have heard amazing accounts of the wisdom of the quakers, and the use they are of, in teaching even novices wisdom by their provident example. However I have as much wondered what the papists, episcopalians, and every other sect of professors, discern so amiable and lovely in black, as to induce them to make it a canonical colour; and almost, if not altogether, essential to the ministrations of the word. No doubt

they have heard that Belzebub is said to be drest in raiment of the deepest black, and one would wonder they should desire their ministers to be cloathed in the same uniforms, seeing they professedly have declared war against him and all his principalities. Yet so it is, for any other than dark coloured clothes upon a minister, would frighten an auditory out of their pews, and the best of sermons would not be worth hearing, if the preacher were not invested in the sacerdotal livery.

FAST. It is I my friends, even I, who am at the bottom of that religious whim. But for me, white would be thought to become the pulpit as well as black, and green would be as holy as grey. I call it whim, because the greatest of the Nazarenes, in ancient times, knew no colour which was more holy than the rest ; and the same clothes in which the apostle Paul made his tents, served him as canonical robes, in which he also preached the gospel. By this you may see that my influence is very extensive, even in religious things.

IMP. What uncle ? Had not Paul a gown and cassock in which he preached, and a surplice in which he offered up his prayers.

FAST. No, Impiator. Where should he have them ? You may know that the gown, surplice, &c. were contrived by the man of sin, I mean the son of perdition, whose principal seat is at Rome ; but in the days of the apostle he was not revealed, notwithstanding the mys-

tery of popish doctrine had indeed began to work. But all this while we forget our good friend the quaker.

INF. Indeed, brother, we do not use the quaker handsomely in so long neglecting of him; but to make him some amends I must tell you, that I have often laughed heartily to hear those precise gentry exclaim against the form of religion by others adhered to, as if they themselves were nothing but spirit, when at the same time they are as formal a people as any upon earth. And in truth very few of them know any thing at all of religion, besides that very imperfect form which they have adopted. But we are wise enough to keep our thumb upon that, for if the cheat were discovered, I am afraid they would be glad to embrace that part of the form of religion which they reject in order to obtain the power of it, of which the far greater part of them now are destitute.

DIS. I can tell you the quakers are liberally paid back in their own coin. And amongst every sect of protestants hitherto mentioned, you will find some who seldom or never look at the people called quakers but through my telescope. Were you by, when the quaker is examined by the rest of the protestants, you would almost split your sides with laughing at their partiality and unfair representation. "Say they, the quakers religion lies all in their dress, speech and money getting. Their

religion lies not in the head, but in broad brimmed half-cocked hats.—Not in their hearts, but in their coats.—Not in their actions, but in their tongues.—All their public meetings are calculated to promote the great end of getting money and increasing commerce; are not religious, but merely political."

By this you may see, that the quakers are abused and belied in their turn, as well as they abuse and belie others. The above reflections are just enough when applied only to some, or to a great many of them, but will by no means hold as a general rule: seeing you all know, there is now and then a quaker who breaks away from his subjection to the god of this world; and despiting all that we and our sable clan can do to prevent it, gets safe within the palace of Immanuel. Moreover there are at those public meetings some, though comparatively few, who have a truly religious design in giving their attendance. From these things you may see my friends, that prejudice deals all in extremes, and knows not how to speak favourably."

INF. That is a gross mistake, into which we have with great vigilance ensnared the posterity of Adam. When a small number only, of any particular body of people are found guilty of a certain evil, the crime is usually charged upon the whole; and the precipitate injudicious conclusion is, "they are all alike." For instance, the Munster baptists were once guil-

ty of certain outrages, with which the whole sect of antipedo-baptists are to this day very charitably calumniated. And because very many of the quakers are amazingly wise to get money, and to keep it when it is procured, it is often said they are all such, and that Avaro is their lawgiver.

Hey day, whither is the rule of moral equity gone, that the professors of religion cannot set their eyes upon it? Where is that candour and benevolence which the Christian religion every where recommends, that you, cousin, have gained such an ascendancy over them?

DIS. By the instrumentality of these glasses, I got the preachers of salvation by grace traduced as Antinomians and the doctrines of the word of God bespattered, as so many sources of licentiousness. For instance, the preacher as his duty is, declares, "That salvation is not of works but grace," and may thus reason with the people, "You can do nothing that will recommend you to the favour of God; the Ethiopian may change his hue, and the leopard his spots, as soon as you who are accustomed to do evil can change your own nature, and learn to do well; for it is not of works of righteousness which ye have done, or can do, that your salvation cometh, but merely by the calling of free mercy." I instantly clap my telescope to the eye of the legalist, and he exclaims "What an enemy to good works, is this same wretched antinomian? According to him, we may as well do nothing,

as strive to procure the favour of God ; may as well lead lives the most vile and profligate, as study to live righteously and holily ; for according to this same preacher, our wickedness is as acceptable to God, as our most holy and virtuous living. Yea, more acceptable ; for he declares, that harlots and publicans shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, sooner than those who do what they can to procure eternal life by their holiness and good works."

Such is the language not only of the vulgar and ignorant, but of many who profess to know much of religion. Whenever the self-sufficient Arminius is in the humour to try the doctrines of the gospel in my inverting mirror, and the preachers of them in my partial telescope, he very candidly and with great liberality bestows upon them such as the following reflections. " These wretched Calvinists represent the almighty God as a partial and unmerciful being, who hides his gospel and withholds his grace from men of virtue, wisdom and prudence, whilst he reveals himself to the most notorious transgressors. They say that a man of a regular inoffensive life may perish for ever, when a murderer like Manasseh, a polluted prostitute as Magdalen, and a wicked oppressor like Zaccheus shall be saved. If this is true, then we had better live notoriously wicked, than sober, righteous and godly lives. What wretched, what dangerous doctrine is this ? They make God to be the author of sin too ;

for they say that nothing comes to pass, but by divine appointment or permission. They talk also of some horrible decree, in which God is said to have ordained the things which are coming and shall come. No need of holiness, if salvation is not of him that willeth ; no need of diligence, if it is not of him that runneth, but to whom the Almighty sheweth mercy. If God hath mercy only upon whom he will have mercy, and hardeneth whom he will, we may live as we please ; for if to be saved we shall not be damned, what diabolical doctrine is this ?* Thus the Arminian raves against the doctrine of the scripture, and all its faithful preachers.

IMP. I pray you cousin, who are these same Arminians ? You know I am but little conversant with religious people of any name.

DIS. The papists in general, cousin ; and all the unconverted, who have any notion at all about redemption through the blood of Christ. Mr Wesley and his followers, the Baxterians and Neonomians ; for none exceed them in enmity against the purity of doctrine. Thus you may see, that the Arminian party is by far the most numerous and most honor-

* These devils I perceive, are not very exact in literally copying the expressions ; but content themselves with expressing the spirit of preachers and writers. If any reader should think that Discorans does injustice to the Arminians here, he may be satisfied of the contrary by consulting Sellon against Coles. —— Fletcher's defence of Wesley's minutes.

able among men, and therefore gains proselytes from all quarters. Though by the way, it is a pretty strong proof that it is the doctrine of antichrist, seeing Immanuel and his doctrines are every where spoken against, by men of philosophy and natural religion.

INF. You know, cousin Discordanus, that, we have found out many ways of opposing the pure gospel, and this is one among the rest ; under our influence, the grace abusing libertine censures the true Christian as legal, because he strenuously pleads for purity of heart and regularity of conversation. On the other hand the real legalist whether he be Socinian or Arminian alleges, that the evangelical Christian is an Antinomian, because he utterly disclaims the merit of good works in the business of salvation. Indeed on all hands those who choose either of the extremes, never fail to censure such as adhere to the middle path of judgment ; which you know is the only path of safety.

FAST. Your observation brother fulfils what is written in Immanuel's own word, concerning these same Nazarenes, " As for this sect it is every where spoken against :" however the enemies of true religion differ among themselves, they agree in stigmatising the real Christian. Belarmine, Pucksius, Huberus, Hemengius, &c. holy fathers of the Romish church, heartily belaboured them in their days ; Dr Whitby, John Goodwin, Whiston, &c. of the English

church, have carried on the dispute with equal warmth and improved the same chain of arguments against them in latter days; in the present time Dr Harwood of Bristol, Mr Wesley of London, Mr Sellon of Derbyshire, and Dr Nowel of Oxford, have managed the popish cause with amazing address, and all the while pass for true protestants. So that every where, that gospel which is suited only to the perishing sinner, is spoken against as pernicious and subversive of holiness.

DIS. Our friends, the men of this world always view the sect of the Nazarenes in my glasses, and as they look on them, they say : “ What a despicable tribe is this ? A set of mean beggarly people, the off-scourings of the earth, and the very dregs of humanity. Not a person of any considerable rank among them. Led by the nose by a set of illiterate dogmatical fishermen. What person possest of any sense of honor would frequent their assemblies, or have any connection with their societies ? ”

INFID. Your remarks are very just, my worthy cousin ; for mankind in general have forgotten that the scripture says, “ Not many wise men after the flesh, not many noble are called : but God hath chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the mighty.” So that the very objections raised against them, prove the Naz-

renes to be the people whom Immanuel hath redeemed out of the world.

DIS. True sir, but they see not the mistake. But to proceed ; my instruments farther represent them, as a set of hollow hearted hypocrites, whom our people thus deride. " What painted deceivers are these, who make such a stir about religion, and affect such an air of sanctity. Hear how they sigh and whine, whilst that rogue of a fanatic tells them his cant story about I know not what. The scripture says, " Be not righteous over much, seek not to be over wise." And I dare say that we have as much religion as they, though we do not make such a stir about it. I'll warrant me these hypocrites are more wicked in private than we are in public ; for although they will not get drunk, curse and swear as we do, they will cheat and lie like the devil himself."

FAST. A demonstrative proof of the perfection of our conquest over them ; for mankind in general do not only hate godliness itself, but even its appearance. And for this reason true sanctity, devotion, and self-denial, are commonly censured as hypocrisy.

DIS. As our good friends of the world are not as yet perfectly agreed in their manner of aspersing good people, it happens that different people pursue different methods equally absurd and diabolical. Some for instance are pleased to say,

“ These people are melancholy. See how they hang down their heads like bulrushes as they pass along the streets. One shall never see them look pleasant nor hear them sing a merry song as others occasionally do with innocence : I hate that religion which makes people melancholy.”

INFID. People greatly betray their own ignorance, when they assign the cause of melancholy to the religion of Jesus? the end of which is to revive and comfort the melancholy sinner, whose heart is opprest with a sense of guilt and defilement. To revive the spirit of the contrite, to bind up the broken hearted, and to make the lame leap for joy because they obtain the prey. Nor do those revilers of religion consider that they themselves, by their contempt of Christianity, do all they can to excite the grief of the sincere Christian, who cannot see his fellow sinners walking jocosely in the paths of perdition, without dropping over them a tear of commiseration.

DIS. No, they never think of the real cause, but with a disdainful sneer continue to say, “ See how they melt in sorrow ; hark how they sigh and groan, whilst their artful parson tells them an horrible story about death and judgment, heaven and hell, salvation and damnation, with I know not what. They are driven out of their senses with such terrible doctrine. Who would thus subject his consci-

ence to the pedantry of these enthusiastic bigots their uncharitable parsons?"

FAST. The fashionable part of the world hate to think of death or judgment, because the very thought would deprive their beloved pleasures of all their imaginary sweetness.

DIS. That is just the case sir; for another of my friends says of the above people, These ways with their parsons teach them are enough to drive a man out of his senses. What man of spirit could endure restraint from all manner of pleasure? According to them, one must not so much as play at cards, spend a cheerful evening at the tavern, nor so much as to take a Sunday's airing. Play-houses, balls, and assemblies, must all be laid aside. And pray how is our time to be spent? Read the Bible, truly, the most tiresome of books; pray the one half of their time, and for aught I know hear sermons the other half of it. What person of any taste could bear to be bound to the observance of such measures? Let them read the Bible who will, give me a good play or novel. I'll have none of their religion, not I."

INFID. It is true, plays and novels are light reading, and well suited to the taste of people abandoned to dissipation. Nevertheless, even people of fashion may if they please reflect, that reading the scriptures, praying and hearing sermons, are subjects unfit for their ridicule; though by the way I do all I can to promote their religion,

FAST. And as for me I hold it good we visit our respective divisions, to see that the works of darkness be not neglected; and that we meet here at the usual time.

DIALOGUE XV.

PRIVY to their appointment, I watched in my solitary retreat, impatient for the return of the black fraternity whom I always found extremely punctual among themselves, and observant of every appointment, unless some very urgent business demanded their presence elsewhere. At the hour appointed they arrived at the place of rendezvous; and having seated themselves on their respective thrones, the conversation was opened by

FASTOSUS. I have been thinking of the stupidity and ignorance of mankind, exhibited in our last interview, and cannot but wonder, however dark and blind, they do not see that the very people whom they censure as enemies to holiness, because they oppose salvation by works, are the same identical persons who are said to be melancholy with being righteous over much. Reason, even unassisted, might easily discover the palpable absurdity, and for the future avoid a contradiction so glaring. I would have my slaves consistent with themselves, seeing I have given them the name of rationalists. But error will always be inconsistent. However, Discordans, we will

leave the blind sons of Infidelity to hug themselves in their fancied rationality, and attend to the remainder of your story.

Dis. My sire, I am all obedience to him who alone could give me being ; and to resume the thread of my story would observe. That, strange as it may seem, I do, by the help of these amazing glasses, make one evangelical minister quarrel with another, and that merely because they do not understand each others manner of expression. One man, for instance, will have it that Immanuel obtained his personality by eternal generation ; another will have it to be by divine filiation ; and another still is content to believe him to be the only begotten of the Father, without attempting to explain how, or in what sense he is begotten or filiated. All of those three are firm in the belief of Immanuel's sonship, his Deity, and mediatorial capacity, as well as every doctrine of faith. And yet, strange as it may seem, those very men shall be so prejudiced against one another, that they cannot comfortably have fellowship together ; but may even prove injurious to each others usefulness ; and it may perhaps be very difficult to determine which of the three discovers most of a gospel spirit. Every one is in the right, and infallibly assured that the other two ought to come into his opinion.

It is the very same with respect to diversity of gifts. One is led in a peculiar manner in-

to the doctrines of faith, well able to state, define, and defend them against opposition. Another is widely led about in the wilderness of temptation and affliction, by which he obtains peculiar talents in comforting the distressed, and pouring oil into the bleeding wounds of broken hearts. And a third is kept on the mount of enjoyment ; his heart is kept warm by a sense of interest, by which enjoyment he is active and lively in the work, a zealous promoter of practical godliness. All of which gifts seem to be essentially necessary to a gospel ministry, and are all by the same spirit. And yet, would you think it, these very men shall treat one another as unsound in the faith in one sense or other ? The first is deemed a dead dull and useless preacher, whilst at the same time he is effectually stopping the mouths of gainsayers. The second, it is feared, loves to be peculiar, and verges a little towards Antinomianism, notwithstanding many a feeble knee is strengthened by his ministry. And the third is a rambling inconsistent preacher, notwithstanding by his instrumentality many are brought to a sense of their sin and danger.

These quarrels are of great use to our government, as they fail not to reproach Christianity, stumble the weak believer, and grieve all good men. But this is not all. You know that two men may have the self same sentiments in religion ; and yet one shall choose to express

himself in this manner, and another in that, which difference of expression only may be attended with very serious consequences, if candour is not present on the occasion. This was the case with Trebonius and Theodorus. Theodorus heard Trebonius preach on a particular occasion, found himself offended with some of his expressions, and thought it his duty to make the preacher acquainted with it as soon as possible. But as Trebonius has too good an opinion of his own attainments, easily to detract a saying, he vindicated not only the doctrine, but the mode of expression. Theodorus was now more than ever persuaded, that Trebonius was unsound in the faith, and was not satisfied with verbally defending the truths of the gospel, i. e. his own sentiments, but commenced a paper war with Trebonius. His apology for this step was indeed artful, for he lugged in both Christ and religion into partnership with him, and under their authority, or pretended authority, he did what he could to impeach the orthodoxy, and mar the usefulness of Trebonius.

When Trebonius read the performance, he found himself aggrieved, and something within him being deeply wounded, he resolved on retaliation. To work he goes: first establishes his personal orthodoxy, which he also called the gospel of Christ, then vindicated his own proceedings, which by an happy turn of thought he also linked with the honor of re-

ligion. Though the truth is, neither the gospel of Christ nor the honor of religion had any concern at all in the squabble. However having first set himself and his doctrine in a respectable point of view, he proceeded diligently to search out and expose every blemish in the performance, and in the end did as much for his brother as he before had done for him. Thus those two champions for the gospel, that is for their own honor, went on exposing to the public, all they were acquainted with of each others weaknesses and folly ; never once suspecting that by so doing each was exposing his own want of wisdom, and a true Christian spirit. Mean while the friends of both were exceedingly concerned, and in vain studied a reconciliation between them. But O what pleasure did it afford our society? And how did Ambitiosus and me, and other jocular devils, laugh at their folly and childishness ? From sources of no greater importance than this, I assure you, most of the quarrels amongst professors arise. But when the contention is once begun, it is hard to say where it will end. By these means we get the affections of Christians divided one from another, and instead of being mutual helpers of each other, as the Almighty designed them, we make them mutual hindrances and burdens ; so that though, we cannot indeed destroy them as we would, we disturb and distract them to an amazing degree.

FAST. My son, you would have had comparatively, little advantage over these same people but for my invention of school-divinity. That is the great engine of the devil Discordans. But for school-divinity you might even have retired to hell, or contented yourself with doing business among the laity, or in the unconverted world ; for if the professors of religion were content with what is written in the scripture, and chose as much as possible to express themselves in Bible language ; there would be such a likeness in expression as well as sentiment, that very probably you would find little to do amongst them.

INFID. I doubt it not, sir. Notwithstanding, I must assure you, my kingdom has suffered greatly by controversy. For nothing has a more direct tendency to inform the mind than well managed controversy. But when it springs from blind prejudice, and is carried on in a party spirit, it has a wonderful tendency to strengthen my interest ; especially if the contending parties mutually agree to expose each other as much as possible, as in the late squabble between Parson Horne and Alderman Wilkes ; and which is for the most part the practice of polemic divines. Those two important gentlemen, the parson and patriot, gave as much pleasure to the court party, by flinging rogue and atheist at each other with so much patriotic zeal, as some divines in their polemic writings has given the devil by throw-

ing heretic, Arminian, Calvinist, Antinomian, &c. in each others faces. Few divines can dispute without calling names.

Disc. I have before now stirred up a spirit of jealousy between a minister and his people, and between one minister and another, in a manner inexpressibly masterly. For example about a century ago, the accurate Camillus preached an excellent sermon at Potheina, which was heard by several of the people to whom Junius was pastor; and they being greatly affected with the seasonableness of the subject, and the practical manner in which it was handled, invited Camillus to visit them, and preach in Junius's pulpit, not doubting but it would be altogether agreeable to their beloved pastor. Full of the sermon when they came home they could not help making Junius partaker of their pleasure. They expatiated largely upon the excellency of his method, the fertility of his illustration, and the propriety of his application, all of which they did not doubt but Junius would admire as much as themselves. But this was not precisely the case. Junius could not help being sensibly affected with what he had heard, but prudence forbid him to deny Camillus his pulpit.

When retired, and reflecting on what had passed, he strongly suspected that his own honor was injured, by his peoples high encomiums on Camillus's sermon. "My people, said

lie, allege they never heard such an excellent sermon as that which Camillus preached. 'Tis something strange, that this one sermon should affect them more than all my seven years preaching among them. I never heard them say half so much about any sermon of mine. It shows a great want of affection and respect to me as their own minister I conceive; and they shall hear of it at a time convenient."

FAST. With Junius's leave I think he discovers a love of praise, which is by no means the offspring of an humble spirit. He would rather be flattered, than his people should be silent in his commendation. But the judicious seldom think it prudent to say much in praise of any person to his face, how well soever they may be affected towards him; and that for two very good reasons. (1.) Such commendation has not a little of the appearance of flattery, however sincere it may be in the party who bestows it. (2.) There are but few who are able to bear much commendation, without sustaining damage by it. A man must be led deeply into an acquaintance with his own nothingness and insufficiency, before he can bear to be praised and caressed *.

* It is a very common thing in gospel churches, that if they have a member of more usefulness than others, they exalt and extol him above his measure; so that he becomes elated with self-conceit, and in the issue, when he cannot carry every point his own way, he turns against his former caressers, and becomes the scourge of the community. In this the righteous judg-

INFID. That is true brother, and yet people may err even on that hand, and be cautious over much; for fear of puffing him up by unseasonable commendation, may depress the spirits of their minister by with-holding from him, that countenance and encouragement which his spirit and circumstances require.

People are in all things given to extremes, and either a minister is caressed and almost adored as an unparalleled person, or he has little or no notice taken of him. I remember a remarkable instance of this in the last century. There was an independent church, who having a minister of a lively address and sound doctrine, one who bid fair for great usefulness among them; yet a lineal descendant of the great Diotrephes, who loved to have the pre-eminence; and one who chose to direct them in all the concerns of life, in their families, in their business, as well as in the church. To his government they yielded themselves implicitly, and almost adored the ground upon which he trod. With caresses and favours they loaded him, till they had raised him to the very height of self-sufficiency and importance; from which they themselves at last assisted to cast him down; and the contempt then poured upon him, pretty nearly equalled their former caresses. After him they had another, of an almost contrary disposition. He had but a very

mean opinion of his own abilities, either for preaching or governing. He had such constant acquaintance with the power of his own corruptions, that he was commonly low and deprest in spirit. He never assumed any superiority over even the meanest member, firmly believing himself to be the vilest and most unworthy sinner of the whole community; he stood in need of all encouragement possible, in order to hearten him for his work. Yet the same people who had destroyed the former with unseasonable kindness, suffered the latter to drag on heavily all his days, that from them he seldom or never heard of his word having been made useful. And I suppose must have sunk under his discouragements, if strangers who afterwards came into the church had not been more free with him in discovering some degree of affectionate regard. Different spirits will require different usage, in order to preserve their usefulness: what was death to the former of those ministers, would have been life and vigour to the latter; and what so exceedingly weakened the hands of the latter, would in all probability have been the preservation of the former. But we forgot parson Junius, cousin.

DISC. Sir, Junius would have his own humour; and accordingly, when the time came that Camillus made his visit, any person attentive to Junius's behaviour, might easily find that his friend's room would to him, have

been more agreeable than his company ; notwithstanding for decency's sake, he forced himself to carry it to him with some degree of seeming civility : I say seeming, for even Christian people have not as yet learned, to be exactly on all occasions what they seem. But Camillus is a sagacious man, soon perceived Junius's coldness through all his formal civility and seeming difference. He began to question with himself from whence this coldness might have proceeded ? In what he might have given offence ? But never dreams that jealousy is at the bottom. Is he not offended with my doctrine ? said he to himself. What can be the meaning of this distant carriage of his ? What have I done or said that might give him umbrage ? So Camillus reasoned, but hit not upon the real cause. And as Camillus is somewhat fond of his own sentiments, though a man inferior to few who are accounted good and religious, he could not help being in doubt about the orthodoxy of his friend. By these means, happily invented by me, this well-designed visit, instead of answering the valuable ends of promoting religious friendship, rather tended, by my intervention, to alienate their affections from each other.

Junius would still have his own humour, and from that day forward discovered a shyness to those, who seemed most delighted with Camillus ; and when occasion offered, he did

not spare bestowing on them, what is called a dry rub.

This was not all, for Junius could not leave his prejudice behind him when he went to the pulpit, where he adapted his discourses accordingly. On the other hand, his people could easily see he was not in his usual spirit; and they concluded, that they had given him no just cause of offence.

Mean while both parties mutually watched each others words and deportment. If Junius happened to speak any thing harsh either from the pulpit or in common conversation, it was said to proceed from a bad spirit. On the other hand, if any of them happened to object to any thing spoken by him, he immediately concluded, either that his people were prejudiced against him, or did not love sound doctrine; for he had not a doubt of the soundness and truth of his own doctrine. And so they went on, till in the issue there was a final separation. Behold, gentlemen, how great a fire a little spark of my nature kindleth. Every well-wisher to the Belzebubian government must acknowledge, that the devil Discordans merits great applause.

FAST. I speak for the rest my son, and own that your usefulness is of great extent. I persuade myself your royal grandfather will well reward you, by giving you eternal duration among the people of the nether regions, for certainly your achievements merit the great-

est esteem. Why, my son, you make the Nazarenes weak as other men?

DISC. After all I assure you, at certain times I have hard work of it. I mean when Mr Submission, my avowed enemy, and me happened to meet. This Submission is one of Immanuel's own children, a very great peacemaker, therefore his business is directly opposite to mine; and although I hate him, I must say, he is one of the meekest persons upon earth. Never is he known to quarrel with any person, except myself. And I confess that in every scuffle with him hitherto, I have had the worst of it; but I thank my stars, it is very seldom I meet with him. When we do meet, meek as he is, I am quite nonplussed, and am obliged either to flee, which I abhor, or to fall before him, which is yet a greater mortification to a spirit so noble as I am.

INF. So then cousin, I perceive, you are as ill put to it when you meet with submission, as I am when I encounter his elder brother Fides. Fides is a warrior with whom I have maintained a very long, though not doubtful war; not doubtful, because I am worsted as sure as ever I enter the lists with him. With great facility I can overturn the power of every other heavenly chieftain; but this fellow, this same Fides is Immanuel's champion, and has performed the most unparallelled achievements: such achievements as never were performed by any hero besides himself. He hath subdued

ed kingdoms, wrought righteousnesses, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness hath made people strong, causing even from fainting to wax valiant in fight, turning to flight the armies of the aliens. He hath given to women their dead children again, sustained others under the most cruel tortures, in such a manner, that they would not accept of deliverance ; gave a good report of the promised land, to those ancient worthies who walked about in sheep skins and goat skins, destitute, afflicted, and tormented, of whom, notwithstanding they lodged in dens and caves of the earth, the world itself was undeserving.

These are a specimen of his achievements ; but great and heroic as he is, he finds that I also am of noble deeds ; a spirit not easily rendered inactive, and more difficult still entirely to subdue. Although he has the promise of the most complete victory in the end, I put him to exert his utmost ; for when to appearance I am dead as a pebble, and Fides has the sole pre-eminence in the soul of man, I play reynard with him, feign myself dead in order to escape the vengeance of his arm.

In time he finds out my deceit, for I watch the opportunity when he is in the very height of a paroxysm, and can scarcely breathe. He is exceedingly troubled with fits, which will sometimes hold him for a long time together,

and in which you would take him to be wholly dead ; then I take the advantage, and rise upon him with all my powers, and beat and bruise him till life begins to return, which is not always of a sudden ; but when he feels the weight of my arm, and the smart of the wounds which I inflict on him, his spirit returns to renewed vigour, he unlocks the magazines of grace, and brings forth such implements of war as I am not able to stand against ; so that before he is well out of his fit he is as strong as ever. At other times he is a long while before he is freed from the effects of his fits ; weakness, indisposition and languor hang upon him for many months, at which time he receives no mercy at the hand of Infidelis.

This fellow is of the most amazing constitution, for whereas on one hand, idleness never fails to throw him into a lethargy, so on the other, hard labour, severe conflicts, and cruel buffetings, never fail to make him strong and vigorous ; and what is very remarkable in itself, but very unlucky for me, is, that, the more he is beaten and bruised the stronger he grows, and these fits in which you would take him to be just a-dying, it is said, only tend to make him the more robust and lively ; which is the reason that although I frequently put him to great pain, I am always discomfited in the issue.

However, gentle friends, you must allow, when circumstances are considered, my valour

will at least equal, if not prove superior to that of Fides. He fights under a certain assurance of victory, and knows of a truth, that in the end he shall be more than conqueror? I as well know that I shall be discomfited, which would dishearten any besides myself, yet notwithstanding the discouragement, I give him many a vigorous turn for it ere I desist, and foully trip up his heels oftener than thrice. Even when I have him down, sprawling and gasping for life, I am conscious he will afterwards renew his strength, and give me a most severe drubbing ; and, that his victorious hand shall in the end put a period to the days of great Infidelis. Yet this noble principle of royal malice prompts me on, and I will not yield an hair's breadth whilst life endures. Oh the fearful combats I could relate, which I have had with this heavenly champion, this same Fides.

FAST. We shall be glad to hear of them, my brother, at another time ; but at present if agreeable, I should like you to resume the story, part of which we have already had*, respecting the progress of your kingdom ?

INF. You have already heard how agreeable to his holiness my instructions were, as also of the laws by which the whole system of religion was inverted, and how the pious priest had invested himself with the perfections of deity. I knew that the introduction of this

* Vol. I. Page 143.

new Christianity might be attended with some difficulty, therefore advised his holiness, the father of the world to deify some others as well as himself; but at the same time, lest his supremacy should be in any wise infringed, to take care that none should be deified till after their death, and that only with an inferior rank of godship. He took my advice, canonized a vast number under the title of saints, and ordained masses to be said to them out of his own newly composed Bible: for the old Bible in use amongst primitive Christians, having its laws so contrary to those of the pope, was by his authority made null and void, and Rome once the mistress of the world, became the mother of harlots; once more the seat of paganism. But for distinction's sake, we call the latter Christian-pagans; because they exercise all their villainy under the specious shew of Christianity.

In order to support the Christian-pantheon worship, slaughter-houses were built, and called holy inquisitions; where every one who was known to deny the supremacy and infallibility of his holiness the pope, or so much as harbour a suspicion concerning the papal faith, was treated with as little mercy as if he had been in hell. By these means, people were kept in the most dreadful awe; so that, if any man happened to be intelligent enough to see through the cheat, he was obliged to keep his mind to himself; well knowing, that one

word spoken against the lucrative faith of the priests, would have ensured his certain death by means the most barbarous and cruel. By this amazing subtilty of priestcraft, with the utmost security they carried on their villainy, under the mask of sanctity for many centuries, and all Europe trembled at the indignation of the priesthood. For by means of my brother's medals, and titles of ecclesiastical dignity, together with my blinding influence, the various orders of reverend fathers, clave as fast to his holiness as scales to one another on the impenetrable back of leviathan.

Yet terrible as the priesthood were, they could not totally prevent the light of the gospel shining less or more, in some parts of Christendom, especially in Britain; where Wickliffe and his disciples gave their reverences no small uneasiness; for which they poured vengeance upon his bones forty years after his demise. This same scripture light kindled in England by Wickliffe's ministry, spread itself to the continent, where first John Huss and Jerome of Prague, galled the sides of popish prelates; for which the very pious council of Constance, first recommended them to the care of the devil by excommunication, and then in the name of the God of mercy, condemned them to be burned to death for believing the Bible. It is amazing to think, with what dexterity they have lugged in the name of the Al-

mighty, to sanctify their murders on all occasions.

About a century after this, a very strict enquiry after truth began, by the instrumentality of John Calvin and Martin Luther, two avowed enemies to popish wickedness. This revival of religion was very alarming to the priests of Rome, and very injurious to my government. His infallible Holiness instigated by the devil Crudelis, voted their immediate destruction by fire and faggot, by poison, assassination, or any way ; for there is nothing dreaded by this same vicar of Christ, so much as the spreading of gospel knowledge.

These measures however I withstood, having from past experience found, that coercive measures are by no means the most likely to reduce professors of religion to the obedience of infidelity ; and I thought it better to send the devil Discordans to visit them, with instructions to make them quarrel about the forms of religion, this I took to be the most likely method to invalidate the testimony of both, and to baffle and confound their followers. This was done, and they jarred exceedingly about circumstantial ; but do what we would, they spake of the doctrines which are absolutely necessary to salvation, with perfect uniformity, which greatly frustrated our dark designs ; and the fire of reformation so lately fanned by deg Great spread itself on the Continent, and if

Britain where it arose in the days of Wickliffe.

The pope and me being loth to give up the government, we had always been accustomed to have in these nations, did what we could to stifle the reformation: but alas! it went on with rapidity in the days of Edward, and might have made greater advances than it has ever yet done, if luckily for his holiness and me, that prince had not been taken away in early life. Mary being a princess just fitted to our turn, no sooner ascended the throne than I flew to England, accompanied by the devil Crudelis, resolving at all events to crush with oppression, all who rebelled against me and his holiness. To this salutary purpose were transported from the pope's arsenal, abundance of hempen cord and faggots beyond number, that we might oblige the people to renounce Jesus Christ, and worship his Romish infallibility.

There were in those days two lusty bishops, right reverend tyrants in the devil, Bonner of London, and Gardiner of Winchester, who hearing of our arrival, came equipped in their prelatic robes, to do us greeting and bid us welcome to the British shore. This brace of right reverend prelates, we appointed prime inquisitors in matters of faith, and principal thwarts of our intended cruelty: indeed none were ever sustained the office of priest, ever more trusty friends, to the government

of Rome and hell, than were those worthy prelates.

The vigilant devil Crudelis ceased not day or night from persecuting the saints, so that many of the ringleaders of the sect of the Nazarenes were apprehended, tried, condemned, and tormented to death at a stake; such as archbishop Cranmer, bishop Hooper, bishop Latimer, bishop Ridley, &c. &c. But as it happened in former persecutions so it fell out in this. The ashes of burned saints proved such fertilizing manure to the church, that in defiance both of hell and the pope, the detested Nazarenes became by far more numerous. Wherefore if our friend Mary of zealous and scarlet memory, had not been summoned hence to receive her reward, the poor devil Crudelis must necessarily have desisted, merely from incessant and unsuccessful fatigue, and the Nazarenes would have obtained rest, solely from our desperation.

But when Immanuel beheld such havoc made of his church, and so many places bathed with sanctified blood, his wrath took the alarm; in his judgment he cut down the zealous queen and her two trusty bishops, and raised queen Betsey to the throne of England. Now the sword of persecution was wrested from the hands of the papists, and the good people of the church of England, did for the puritans what the zealous papists had done for them during the reign of queen Mary. This

same queen Elizabeth, was a great zealot for high church, and a vigorous nurse of episcopacy; but the Brownists and other dissenters, felt the full weight of her regal vengeance. I happily prevailed unexpectedly, with the divines of the established church, to retain the more refined part of the popish system; which those men who were for a thorough reformation, both in doctrine and discipline could not comply with; and for their non-compliance, we taught them that the arm of episcopacy is every whit as heavy as that of popery, when it is exerted for the good of the church. And for my own part I prompted their reverences, to coercive measures, being very apprehensive, that the reformation might have been carried on farther than it really was.

AVAR. And I assure you, I myself was not idle in those days, but played my game into the hand of great Infidelis. I met their lordships the prelates; (I shall never forget it) in full convocation, and reasoned with them on the intended reformation, and unto my arguments they lent a willing and attentive ear. " Well, gentlemen, said I, do you intend to come to a thorough reformation then, and reduce Christianity to its primitive simplicity? Have you considered, gentlemen, that in so doing you must lose your princely revenues, and descend to a level with plain Peter, Paul, and Barnabas, which must needs be a very mortifying step to some of you. Recollect I

pray you, how long your present profits and dignities, have been enjoyed by your predecessors in your several sees. Long before Christianity was known in Britain; even beyond the ken of history, this nation was divided into the several bishopricks and archbishopricks by you enjoyed. Through all the ages of popery, the same division of the nation into arch-flaminries and flaminries, continued under their present denominations; and will you discover such a degree of mortification, as to give up the profits annexed to your ecclesiastical dignities? That were to show indeed, that protestant bishops have less providence than pagan flamins. Yet, if you are determined to purge your religion from every relict of popery; your profits, gentlemen, must be parted with, your revenues must be enjoyed no more, and how will this be relished by you?" By such sensible and seasonable remonstrances, I won greatly upon the minds of their lordships, and in the issue it was resolved, that rather than part with their dignities and revenues, they should submit to many things which have no foundation in scripture.

FAST. You bring to my mind, cousin Avaro, the reception I met with by the dignitaries of the ancient church, on the distribution of the fore-mentioned medals. I went attired in my robes of state, to deliver one of my archiepiscopalian medals to a certain priest; whom I instantly created "His grace and most rever-

end." He mumbled over to himself several times; "most reverend, his grace," viewing the medal with the closest attention. It is—it is, said he, a very soft and agreeable mode of address. Most reverend; his grace. Yes, my lord, said I, it is very musical, and what I myself only am capable of composing. A mode of address very becoming the dignity of an archbishop. Humble preachers, such as Peter, Paul, Timothy, and Titus, might be very well contented, without being their graces and most reverend, for they were not as you are, courtiers, clothed in soft raiment. But for a spiritual courtier, for the primate of a province, to prostitute his name to vulgar mouths, would be highly unbecoming, would greatly eclipse the honors of your elevated station. "But worthy sir, returned he, you know this is a very censorious world in which we live, and some people may be wicked enough to suppose, that such a title as, his grace, does not so well become a man whose breath is in his nostrils, and I may be censured as ambitious." I hope, my lord, replied I, you will not meditate too much on the gloomy subject of mortality, or that will make your dignity cumbersome indeed. Honors fade, sir, on the prospect of the grave. As to your being censured as proud and ambitious, I hold the contrary; it will be deemed essential to your high estate, and the use of the Bible being prohibited, the laity will not know but your order is of aposto-

lical institution. Besides, there is my lord duke enjoys the same title of address with your grace; so that instead of being censured as proud and antichristian, all ranks of people will revere you the more for it; especially, as it will make you a fit companion for princes. The nobility will consider you as their superior in as much as a spiritual duke is superior to a temporal, so that in the church your seat will be next to the cardinals, and in the senate-house, next to the prince himself. The gentry will faun upon you spaniel-like, in order to obtain preferment for younger sons, and the vulgar will adore you as a demi-god.

I would farther advise you, to lay aside preaching to the vulgar race, and apply yourself wholly to affairs of state; unless called to it, may be once in seven years, to preach to the king and his nobles. "Ay," replied the worthy prelate, "but how shall I dispense with the obligations I am under as a bishop, to meditate on these things, to give myself wholly to the ministry of the word and prayer, yea, to be instant in preaching the word in season and out of season?" "Oh sir," replied I, "you need to be under no concern about that. "Surely, sir, that is the duty of a bishop," replied he. Yes, very true said I; the duty of bishops, such as were in the apostles days; such bishops as are appointed in the New Testament. But what has that to do with a diocesan bishop or an archbishop, of whom you

yourself are the first. There were none of them you know in the apostles days; none appointed in the word of God. And therefore the laws which bind scriptural bishops to obedience, can have no manner of power over you as diocesans; much less can a metropolitan, such a bishop as the apostles never thought of, be under any such injunctions. Surely your grace must know that a lord bishop, or a gracious metropolitan must have enough to do without preaching the gospel. Yet if these things are not sufficient to remove the scruples of your mind; and you should still have a notion, that preaching is a duty incumbent on you, I can put you in a way to satisfy your conscience, without abating any thing of your greatness.

“ Pray, sir, be so kind,” said he. May it please your grace, replied I, it is neither more nor less than to preach by proxy, as people plead their causes in a court of judicature. You know it is the same in effect, whether you preach in person or by proxy, so that your numerous flock have preaching enough.

Farther with your grace’s leave, I do not think it becoming your dignity, even to say prayers in your own family. How far beneath the character of such a spiritual dignitary, to be down on his knees amidst his servants, worshipping his Maker? Let me advise you, either to lay aside family worship altogether, or have it performed by a chaplain. This will have

two very great advantages attending it. 1. It will save your grace a great deal of hard and unpleasant labour. And 2. It will make your grace's piety to be admired by the vulgar. Methinks I hear one say to another, "What a good man is my lord, the archbishop? for a though he is too high for saying prayers himself; or has got so much that he has no need to pray, he gives a good salary to Mr Honeylip duly to perform the offices of religion in his stead."

All this while, the good archbishop continued absorbed in thought, and awaking as from a trance, he said, with astonishment glowing on his countenance, "Sir, you amaze me! So pertinent your counsel; so persuasive your address. You have more than half brought me over to your opinion, as my future conduct will testify."

Having succeeded even beyond expectation with his grace the archbishop, I waited immediately on all the diocesans, within the pontifical jurisdiction, and took the most likely measures to bring them over to our interest.

1. I persuaded them, as I had done the archbishop before them, that the worldly grandeur with which I and his holiness had invested them, was certainly too heavy a burden for them to be able to ascend the pulpit stairs, above once or twice a year; and that even then it ought not to be, to preach to an ordinary congregation.

2. That they might discharge their duty, to the souls within their respective dioceses, by providing vicars to watch over them in their stead, in their several parishes or divisions, that they might freely spend their time either at the court of Rome, or at the courts of their several princes, without sustaining loss at home.

DISC. Why, sir, according to your account, the readiest way to stop the mouth of a noisy preacher, is to make a bishop of him.

INF. The only way in the world, cousin. Had the king of England given a bishoprick to the noisy Whitefield, as he was advised to do by a certain nobleman ; it is unknown what mischief might have been prevented. A bishoprick would have done him more real injury, than if all the bishops in England had written against him. You remember well, how Dr. D—d once threatened our ruin, and promised fair for doing a mischief to our government ; till our happy stars fixt him in a prebend's stall, and a r——l chaplainship ; since which time he has been quiet enough, and lets people sleep on and take their rest securely.

FAST. Having secured both orders of popish bishops, I took care to establish deans, abbots, monks, friars, vicars, chaunters, prebendaries, canons, minor canons, &c. &c. From thence I proceeded to persuade the higher orders of clergy, to encourage plurality of livings, well

knowing that if a country vicar could but procure a fat and fruitful benefice, he would even imitate his betters, and preach as little as possible. I have often with great pleasure observed, that if a benefice exceed two hundred pounds per annum, the poor vicar who enjoys it, finds himself very unable to preach, and is therefore obliged to hire a journeyman, to whom he leaves the bulk of his business. By these means we got curates introduced into the church; a set of gentlemen sold to slavery and inured to poverty, not for want of parts and learning, nor always for want of piety, but for want of what is by far more necessary to preferment, a patron. A journeyman weaver, watch-maker, or cabinet-maker, can afford a better table than many a gentleman, who lacks nothing but a patron, to make him equal to the very first of bishops.

Happily it just answered our desire, and was not long before a sharp conflict between the vicars and curates ensued; as it is not without a vein of drollery, I shall give you a sketch of it. There was a certain vicar, who having obtained a living of about £800 a year, called his curate to him one day, and thus addressed him: "Mr Curate, I am now in a station which will admit but of little preaching; I must therefore get you to take that part of the service principally upon yourself; I am under a necessity of visiting the neighbouring gentlemen, and assisting them in their polite amuse-

ments, as has been the custom of my predecessors for time immemorial; so that little of my time can be devoted to preaching or praying, and less still to study and contemplation." Mr Curate replied, "Indeed Sir, I am but a poor hireling, whose scanty allowance is no way adequate to labours so extensive. I am resolved, sir, to measure my services by my annual salary." The vicar's benefice being sufficient to raise him above preaching, and the curate's allowance so small, that he could not afford to preach much, it so fell out between vicar and curate, that the parishioners could not obtain above twenty minutes preaching weekly, in return for their tythes, many dues and offerings. This you know was greatly to our advantage.

Another instance of altercation, between the vicar and curate, I well remember, which also was decided in our favour. "Hark you, Mr Curate, (said a certain vicar one day to his journeyman) I expect you shall take the care of all the souls, within my parish, upon yourself, as I have much business of a very different nature on my hands." "I take the care of them, sir, (replied his curateship) what have I to do with them? I shall take no care of them I assure you." "Well, but Mr Curate, said the vicar, I hired you on purpose that you should take the care of them, off from me." "Indeed sir, rejoined the curate, I will not, I am resolved; do you think that for the scanty

allowance of twelve shillings per week, I will put my own soul in the place of your parishioners? No, sir, let him take the care of them, who is best paid for so doing." "Then, said the vicar, let my lord bishop take care of them, for he is better paid than either vicar or curate." By these means the parishioners may go to heaven or hell, as most suits their inclination, provided always the fees are punctually paid.

IMP. Well, father, I really think those curates were in the right; for as they receive but journeyman's wages for doing the drudgery of the business, it is unreasonable to desire any more than journeyman's labour from them. If they perform the more servile parts of the office, for their scanty allowance, it seems but meet the vicars who receive the far greatest part of the profits, should take the burthen of souls upon themselves. If I am not greatly mistaken, the far greater part of mankind, the vicars and high-priests alone excepted, are of the same opinion with me and the curate. However, that was all in the days of popery, and the church of England, hath since been blessed with a great reformation.

INF. It has so, Impiator, and been deformed again, almost far enough. Some time after the reformation indeed, the gospel was preached almost every where in England, which made me apprehend the most dreadful consequences, and made me exert my utmost influ-

ence, in order to reduce the clergy to obedience.

This important point was in a great measure carried, by fixing their attention inordinately upon tradition, and kindling relentings in the bosom of many a gownsman, towards the old scarlet lady, whose government had been rejected. So, that by degrees I drew them to take counsel, as formerly, from the wise Infidelis ; one particular instance of which I shall give you, if you think it will not too long detain you from necessary business.

FAST. That is well thought of brother. Idleness belongs not to our fraternity ; I hold it good therefore, that we adjourn to our usual time of meeting.

DIALOGUE XVI.

Fastosus.

WHEN we parted yesterday, you mentioned some particular instance of the clergy seeking to you for direction, brother ; will it please you to relate it to us now ?

INF. It is only a little confabulation I had with my good friend, parson Out-and-in. The case was this : I set out one morning for Rome, to remove some scruples which infested the mind of his holiness, the father of the world ; but passing by parson Out-and-in's garden, I beheld the reverend gentleman in his morning gown and velvet cap, walking slow and pensive, to all appearance in a dejected manner. Charity bid me stop and relieve the thoughtful divine. At her command I stopped, and called : So—ho, Mr Out-and-in ; how do you do ? The good gentleman awaking as from a trance, erected his body into a perpendicular posture, pushed up the snout of his cap from over his eyes, and finding it was me who called, instantly replied. “ O my good friend, Rationalis ! (for that is the name by which I am known by the clergy of all denominations) am I so happy as to meet with you, in this so difficult season ? I pray

you most honorable tutor, be pleased to stop and give me your advice."

I went to him, and thus the old Levite began. "Most truly, noble, and intelligent sir, I and my brethren, the genuine children of learning and science, have long been much grieved at the rapid progress of fanaticism, which now prevails amazingly over the people; so prevalent is it, sir, that fanatical preachers are more followed, more esteemed than we, the votaries of almighty reason. In these days, sir, there are some, who in a frantic manner decry the noble powers of the human soul, which we esteem to be almost divine; who preach salvation, by what they call the righteousness of Christ, contrary to the instructions which we receive from that illumination which thou hast given us. We have long been studying how to suppress this fanaticism, and to promote the more consistent doctrine of salvation by our own works, and the liberty and freedom of our own will to perform perfect righteousness. It is intolerable sir, to hear men of virtue and piety, placed on a level with vile publicans and sinners, who know not the law, and are therefore accursed. Impious in the highest degree, to suppose that the benevolent Deity will not reward our good endeavours to please him, by working out our own salvation, without trusting in the righteousness of another."

To be sure, said I, to gentlemen of virtue

and goodness, it must be very mortifying to submit to be levelled with those who work not, but believe in him who justifieth the ungodly. Very trying indeed, to own one's self to be an hell-deserving sinner, when your own reason bears witness, that you deserve the inestimable blessings of everlasting happiness, for your own personal goodness. What man of virtue and moral goodness? what gentleman of a clear head and good heart, like yourself, can bear to be told, that harlots and publicans shall enter the kingdom of heaven sooner than you? I wonder not, my worthy sir, that the preaching of salvation by the works of another, should be a stone of perpetual stumbling, and a rock of invincible offence to you. And this offence will never be removed, till we can so manage it, that this same book called scripture, is made to truckle to the more consistent dictates of human reason; by which alone the authenticity of doctrine ought to be attested, independently of any records whatever, either ancient or modern.

I myself have beheld the preaching of the cross of Christ, with a great deal of uneasiness; but for seeing the self-righteous Jews break their bones by stumbling upon it, and the wise philosophic Grecians turning merry-andrews, and laughing at it as foolishness, I should certainly have sunk into despair; because I was unhappy enough to see it prove both the power of God, and the wisdom of God, to those

who felt themselves actually in a perishing condition. But my good Mr Out-and-in, permit me to tell you, that whatever pain I endure on account of a preached gospel, I can do nothing that will effectually prevent it, without the concurrence of the clergy. By the way, let me not so much as hint any defection of the clergy. No, sir, I thank my auspicious stars, by far the greatest part of them, are upon the right side of the question. There are but few, very few, who preach those enthusiastic doctrines, with which the articles, homilies, and rubric are stuffed; very few who concern themselves about what is, or what is not, the doctrine of the Bible.

But, to the matter of your troubles, sir, I apprehend they may be reduced to these two heads only: To suppress the growth of fanaticism on the one hand, and secure to yourselves the patrimony of the church on the other. "These are all, returned he, if we can but accomplish these, we desire no more." Then, sir, if no more is aimed at, I shall put you in a way by which you may accomplish them.

Observe me then, my good friend Mr Out-and-in, the first thing to be done, is, to draw as thick a veil as possible over the personal excellences, grace, and righteousness of Immanuel; for these, wherever they are preached, have a tendency to eclipse all human glory, and greatly to diminish the profits

of the altar ; which you know are the principal things that ought to be advanced. The holy trade of priestcraft can never prosper, but in proportion to your departure from the doctrine of the cross. Yet this must be done with caution, lest the eyes of the people should be opened, and the propagation of your rational religion be prevented. The important question then is, " How you may retain the character and authority of Christ's ambassadors, whilst at the same time you are labouring to extirpate the doctrine of salvation by his blood, from the rational world ; as you cannot expect to be so much regarded by the people, if ever you lose your claim to ambassadorship. Of this therefore you must be very cautious, and by no means declare yourselves avowed enemies to the gospel in so many express words.

No, sir, you must find out the most glorious names which possibly can be ascribed to the Son of God, yet such names as do not imply his personal divinity ; these would spoil your scheme, and therefore must be rejected. For instance, you must not call him Immanuel, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, God manifested in the flesh, Jesus Christ yesterday, to day, and for ever the same ; Alpha and Omega, &c. &c. These and such like names must absolutely be laid aside, for they make directly against the rational scheme. On the other hand, you must be equally careful not to speak slightly of his person, name, and autho-

rity, by barefacedly calling him, but a man like yourselves, as Doctor Priestley has precipitately done ; and by so doing betrayed the cause of rational religion, into the hands of the orthodox, to be mangled and tortured after the manner of that wicked Shaver. In short you must consider, that the people are not all rational alike, and therefore a downright denial of the Godhead of Christ, may be attended with very serious consequences. Some people are firmly attached to the Athanasian creed, merely out of deference to the judgment of their ancestors ; and others are as firmly attached to the scriptures, from an inward conviction of their divine propriety ; so that without the greatest care you may be baffled in your very first attempts to promulgate your rational religion.

In short, sir, notwithstanding you believe him to be but a man like yourself, or at most but a dignified creature, you must of necessity, for fear of the populace, give him a kind of suffragan deity or deputed Godhead, like that of Mars or Mercury in the pagan theology. Your friend Mr Whiston, a man of deep intelligence has shewn you what may be done in this way ; do you, my good Mr Out-and-in, imitate the same Homer-like minister*.

* Homer-like minister. Homer was a wonderful creator of gods and goddesses, and so was Mr Whiston, from his own account of the Trinity, which he makes to consist of one uncreated, and two created Gods.

To be more particular, you must never omit when you speak of him, to use great and swelling words of seeming respect, as if you had the most profound veneration for his person: call him the only son of the most high God —the first born, and most exalted of creatures —a being far above men and angels—under God, the great dispenser of all things, both in earth and heaven. Not a syllable of his measuring the seas in the hollow of his hand; of his meting out heaven with the span; of his comprehending the dust of the earth in a measure; weighing the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance; or of his taking up the isles as a very little thing. That is a description of Jesus, most adverse to what you would have thought to be rational religion, which considers him as no more than a man like yourselves; it is good therefore that such descriptions should never be quoted. By keeping close to those appellations which are proper to him, only as man and mediator, you will vail his real personal dignity, and in time your audience will quite forget all their old orthodox notions, concerning the proper deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, which at present are so very offensive to you and your brethren.

2. When you happen to hear of any man, who is a zealous and diligent preacher of Christ crucified as the only foundation of the sinner's hope, you must look to it that something be

speedily done, to prevent his success, for such a man is capable of being very injurious to us and our rational religion. His followers will consider you as no better than hirelings, mercenary priests, and enemies to the gospel of salvation. Therefore you must, but always with the greatest art, attack his character. Stigmatize him with such names of reproach as you think will be most likely to take with the vulgar. However you must beware of touching his moral character, for that will be like the body of Achilles, invulnerable even to malice itself. His religious character, because less understood by the common people, will be more easily injured, and therefore the most proper object of your attacks.

You may call him an enthusiast, which is a name understood by very few; therefore the greatest part of the people will consider him as some outlandish monster, and avoid him as they would shun the path of a crocodile. Or you may call him a methodist; this also is a name well calculated to excite popular abhorrence, as you know many would rather choose to be papists than methodists. Or you may call him an anabaptist, or fanatic. In short you may dress him in what names you think will most effectually stir up the people to bait him, as they would do a bull or a bear from the forest; and so far as your influence goes, you may totally prevent his usefulness;

which you know will be a great service done to the devil, and to rational religion.

But my good Mr Out-and-in, take care that you be not too bare-faced in your slanders, as Doctor Priestley has been in his against the orthodox dissenters. His zeal for rational religion is so furious, that it prompted him to rend the disguise, which ought by all means to have concealed his implacable hatred of the orthodox. This however he has thought proper to discover in such a manner, that his word in a way of slander, will now scarcely be taken by any body, so that even the rationals themselves are ashamed of his rashness. But you, my friend, may avail yourself of his mis-carriage, and avoid the rock upon which he foundered under full sail, by considering that, amongst the laity there are always to be found a discerning few, whose penetration may be too keen for a flimsy disguise. Now, should your malice be detected, your very reproaches would bring him proselytes, as in the case of Dr Trapp of crabbed memory, and the late Mr Whitefield. Therefore let all your reproaches seem to flow rather from pity than malice. Do not fail to commend something of the good that is in him; this will be an excellent cloak, from under which you may with the greater freedom shoot your arrows of calumny. For example, when his name is mentioned in company, you may say, "He is a good sort of man, I believe; but I am sorry

for him, poor man, he hath imbibed sad enthusiastic principles. The poor weak, well meaning man would do good if he could, I believe, but is sadly led away by methodistical notions." Sir, there are a thousand ways of vending scandal with seeming pity, which some people are perfect masters of; but your divines are too warm, and therefore their arrows fall to the ground before they inflict any wound at all.

I have known an important minister ere now, ruin the reputation of his neighbour with less than ten words speaking, and those two seemingly spoken in much pity. Oh sir, there requires great art in scandalizing to purpose. Nothing gives such a point to the arrow of scandal, as a seeming concern for the welfare of the party whom you want to ruin. I could recommend you to certain gentlemen in great estimation for religion and virtue, as the most accomplished in this necessary art, did not I know that you disdain to learn from any inferior to myself.

3. If you would invalidate the doctrine of imputed righteousness you must begin just here, and proceed in the following manner. That it is a doctrine which must be brought into contempt, as you would wish to preserve the honor of the creature is clear to a demonstration; seeing, whenever a man is brought cordially to embrace it, his looks, however lofty before, are brought down, and he lies at

the feet of Jesus as a perishing and lost sinner; which you know is inconsistent with the dignity of a philosopher, or a rational Christian.

You must, my worthy Mr Out-and-in, you must indeed, declare that man having received no damage at all by the fall of Adam, and coming into the world in perfect innocence, is capable of having a righteousness of his own, which will justify him before an infinitely holy God. "Ay but Mr Rationalis, said he, how shall I manage in this, seeing there are so many plain passages of scripture which contradict me?" Do my good friend! You must not mind that, if you intend to be a rational preacher. You must shew yourself a man, and leap over them, as many have done before you. Imitate the zealous Dr Priestley, and like him tell your hearers, that the scriptures do not mean what they say*. What men of reason would regard a few adverse texts of scripture, when the dignity of human nature is the subject in question?

For your encouragement, permit me to assure you, that, however adverse the scriptures may be to your rational doctrine, the populace will be very propitious.

You can never please men so well as by clapping them on the shoulders, telling them their hearts are good, that they need not doubt of getting safe to heaven, whether they believe in the Son of God or not. And I engage, sir,

* Familiar illustration of certain texts, &c.

your auditory will caress you for the sake of your pleasing doctrine.

4. As to the Holy Ghost, I would not have you absolutely refrain from mentioning him, and his assisting influence, because your people read of him in your church liturgy so very often. But be sure roundly to assert, that it is mere enthusiasm for a man to expect to receive the Holy Ghost in these days; and let them solve the difficulty, how the thoughts of a man's heart can be cleansed by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, whom they cannot receive, as they shall find opportunity. It seems I proved as a kind of remembrancer here, for he stopped me short and said. "Let me see — I think I should remember something about the Holy Ghost somewhere — Hum — if I mistake not, it was relating to the office of ordination."

Yes sir, said I, it was; you only professed to my lord bishop, that you were moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon you the office of a deacon. That was all, sir. He replied "I believe it was some such thing. But pray, sir, was it rational in me so to do, seeing I did not then believe that any man receives the moving influences of the Holy Ghost in these times?" Surely, said I, it was. You know, sir, no man can get a benefice without it in your way, and I pray you, who would not do as much as that for a good living? Why should you have any scruple of conscience, seeing you have got some hundreds a year by it? I know

many, very many, who did the same, sir, who can hardly procure thirty pounds per annum. On my word you sold your conscience well. But for those sons of science, they foolishly threw theirs away without the prospect of any comfortable return. I assure you, a journeyman weaver can afford a better table than many a clergyman of the rank of curate.

5. Once more ; as the works of the Saviour of mankind must not be wholly omitted ; should you be asked, What Jesus did for his people? You must answer, as it were in a rapture : " Oh ! he hath done great things for us. He descended from the heavenly glories, and assumed our nature. He hath abrogated the severity of the old, and introduced a new and milder law ; lived agreeable to the precepts of it himself, and when his instructions were finished, he confirmed us in his ways, and sealed the truth of his doctrine with his own precious blood." Thus my friend, you may, by good management, if grace prevent not, deceive the very elect. Tears of thankfulness trickled down the old gentleman's beard ; he gave me most hearty thanks, and protested that no instructions could be more agreeable to the dictates of his own reason.

FAST. I can tell you brother, your advice was not in vain ; but has been invariably followed, so that this rational religion is now very little injurious to our interest.

INFID. It is very moderate, sir, and may well be tolerated even by our governors them-

selves. It has not the least affinity with the doctrine of the cross ; which is justly the abhorrence of every partisan of ours, as will appear from the creed which I composed, and put into the hands of my friend Mr Out-and-in ; which if agreeable I shall recite.

DIS. I pray you, sir, let us have the creed. It may afford matter of entertainment to have the creed, of the enemies of all creeds and confessions.

INFID. Not enemies to all creeds, cousin ; only to those creeds which they deem orthodox ; those which debase the sinner, exalt the Saviour, and thwart the views of human arrogance. But they are very fond of such creeds as tickle proud nature, eclipse the sovereignty of grace, and debase the Saviour, as insufficient of himself to save to the uttermost those that come to God by him : as you will see in the following.

“ I believe in the great God, the Father and fountain of Deity, as an absolute and supreme being, eternal, immortal, invisible, omnipresent, all-powerful, the Creator, Supporter, and Governor of all worlds. I believe in another God, who is not eternal in his existence, not omnipresent in his essence ; not omnipotent, but entirely dependent on the great God for his very existence ; not supreme over all, as Paul the fanatic thought, but subject in all things to him that made him ; not immortal, but actually died about seventeen hundred

years ago, for purposes afterwards to be mentioned. I farther believe, concerning this second God, that he was created, as the famous Whiston says, by the great God in an ineffable manner, before the foundation of the world, far above all angels, and appointed to be the minister of the wrath and mercy of the Creator. I believe in a third God, called the Holy Ghost, created by the second God, or suffragan of the supreme Deity, and that therefore he may properly be called the grandson of the great God." —

" I beg your pardon, said Mr Out-and-in, interrupting me, it would be more rational still, to ascribe no deity whatever to the Son of God."

O sir, replied I, we shall fit you in that in the most agreeable manner ; then to the article of faith in the great God, add, " I believe in Jesus Christ as a mere man like ourselves, yet pious and holy. A man sent of God, as a great teacher, whose business in life was to introduce a new mild law, commonly called the gospel ; because God had altered his mind respecting the salvation of mankind, since his giving of the old law, which upon examination, and long experience, was found to be too strict and severe, consequently unjust and fit for abolition. Wherefore he raised up this same Jesus Christ, a man like ourselves, and sent him to correct the errors which infinite wisdom had fallen into, in giving what we call the moral law. I

believe, that when he obtained a perfect correct copy, he taught it to mankind, and called it the new law, or the gospel. I believe that this good man actually did make such corrections, alterations, and amendments in the moral law, as he saw meet, notwithstanding he positively declared, that "although heaven and earth should both pass away, not one jot or tittle of the old law should fail, i. e. be superseded by any other law whatever. I believe that Jesus Christ, this good man like ourselves, having rendered the old law a perfect system, and having taught it in its purified state, died to confirm the truth of his doctrine, just as Cranmer and other good men have done since then. I believe farther, that he continued under the power of death for three days and then was raised from the dead, to shew that he was no impostor, but was actually commissioned to amend the old law, which, prior to his correction, was neither holy, just, nor good, as the mistaken apostle thought it to be. Farther still, I believe that in his exalted state he is, as good Dr Priestley observes, only a man like ourselves, notwithstanding the orthodox ignorantly worship him as Immanuel, God with them; God manifested in the flesh; the true God and eternal life; the Alpha and Omega; the first and the last, and I know not what enthusiastic titles, such as that book called the Bible ascribe to Jesus of Nazareth.

Concerning the original state of man, I be-

lieve, that Adam did not beget his children in the likeness which he himself bore, at the time of their being begotten, but in the likeness which he bore before he had sinned ; that although the fountain became polluted, the streams continue pure and limpid ; and although the root was depraved by transgression, the branches and fruit are holy and innocent. So that there is no such thing as original sin in any sense ; nor have the posterity of Adam any share in the guilt of his transgressions. And whereas the death of infants is frequently alleged by fanatics, and orthodox Christians as a proof of original sin. I do most rationally believe concerning those that die in infancy, that either God in an arbitrary unjust manner murders them without cause ; or that their death is occasioned by some sin of their own, committed either whilst they were in the womb, or before they had being ; for no man can die for the sins of another, says your oracle, and yet it is clear that infants do die.

Moreover, I believe that every man is possest of power, to justify himself by the deeds of the law, and to procure salvation by his own willing and running, contrary to the opinion of Paul, and the rest of the orthodox ; that salvation is obtained by works of righteousness of our own performing, and not by the obedience and death of any other person whatever ; that the glory of our salvation shall redound to the absolute mercy of God, and our own good en-

deavours to obtain it; and not unto Christ, whom the orthodox enthusiastically say, has loved them, and washed them in his blood, by which he has redeemed them to God out of every nation, kindred, people, tongue and language."

This creed being cordially received by my votaries, I laughed in my sleeve, and said, A fig for you all my enemies; Goodwin, Charnock, Owen and Crisp, &c. &c. where are you now? A fig for all your snarlings at my principles! Lift up your heads from the dusty pillows, and listen whilst your own descendants, ye puritans, with all the force of eloquence plead the cause of great Infidelis.

IMP. Honored father, I admire your subtlety, and almost adore your craftiness, who would have thought, when we heard the old puritans, raving against unbelief and prophaneness, that in such a short time their descendants would have forsaken the principles of their progenitors. But I give you joy my sire, your operations have lacked no advantageous success.

INF. You are very obliging, my son! But I perceive you are not aware of all the glory of this conquest. Perhaps my friends would think it strange, if I should tell them, that by this device, I have again introduced into Britain, as gross Idolatry as ever was preached by the ancient Druids, as ever was known at Rome or Athens; and that British divines have arrived at an higher degree of heathenism

than ever was known in the celebrated pantheon.

IMP. Nay then, my bewildering parent; get with it, and explain yourself. What idolatry again in Britain? Happy stars!

INF. Hold, son—Restrain yourself I say.—Do not you remember the charge I gave you Impiator, when I sent forth my several worthies to sound my sleep-giving trumpet.

IMP. I can remember nothing at present so great is my joy! O idolatry? How glad am I that the Britons have again embraced thee?

INF. This, son, was my charge, and I desire you will remember it. Take care said I, Impiator, take care what you do. It is a matter of great importance to our infernal interest, to which a blunder of yours might on this occasion be very injurious. These men are gone forth upon my business; with commission from me, your father, to counteract a preached gospel, and as much as may be to sap its foundation doctrines. Now my son, in order to be useful to me, it is highly necessary they should bear the appearance of the strictest sanctity, and be not any wise defective in tithing annise, mint, and cummin, or how can they impose the cheat upon mankind with success? Whereas, the appearance of devotion and sanctity, will give energy to their arguments, and greatly recommend their doctrine; there is no beating it out of the heads, even of the most ignorant, that

there is such a thing as devotion and sanctity, inseparably connected with religion.

Now my son, thou art but a purblind devil, and at best precipitate, therefore thou mayest overturn my well concerted scheme. I charge thee, therefore, Impiator, as thou wishest well to our male-administration, that thou shalt refrain from tempting these men into any of thine openly, notorious ways, and to leave them entirely to my government: for they cannot miscarry whilst I have the pleasure of reigning in their hearts.

FAST. A very necessary caution, and ought to be regarded.

IMP. I remember it very well, and have hitherto acted accordingly; notwithstanding I would rather allure every person to take up his dwelling in some part of my dominions. But sir, I never knew that your rational divines were properly idolaters.

INF. Do you consider then. They tell their hearers, that Immanuel is no more than a dignified creature, who has no personal claim to the essential properties of true and absolute divinity, notwithstanding many of them pay divine honors to his name. Now, my son, the worship of a creature how dignified so ever, is by all allowed to be mere idolatry.

FAST. They deny the charge of idolatry, brother, by alleging, that they offer to Immanuel, only an inferior worship suited to the inferiority of his person as a created being.

INF. The very thing, in which their idolatry consists, and is on a level with that of the antient pagans. It was an inferior kind of adoration, which the ancients paid to their heroes and common Deities, in comparison of that, which they offered to Jupiter their great God, the supposed king and father of all the rest. Mars and Mercury for instance, were never considered as supreme, but as acting under the direction and delegation of Jupiter; as such, and such only they were adored and worshipped; so that to distinguish between the worship of the father, as supreme, and that of his son, as inferior and subordinate, instead of exculpating them from the charge of idolatry, doth actually enforce it.

FAST. But to clear themselves from the charge of idolatry they allege farther, sir, the command of God himself, for their worshiping the son notwithstanding his inferiority. The great God say they, hath given command that all the angels of God should worship him, and that all men should honor him; shall then our obedience draw upon us the reproach of idolatry?

INF. So they say. But if they knew the scriptures, only half as well as you and me, who have laboured all our days to cloud their evidence, they would see that these commands, instead of exculpating them from, do actually bring home the charge of idolatry upon them. God hath expressly commanded, that, " Man-

kind shall have no other Gods before him," as objects of religious adoration, either by office or otherwise. And he would hardly have himself introduced another, of a different nature, and commanded, all men to worship him; seeing in this case, one command would have clashed with the other. This would have been the spring of wild confusion, and everlasting uncertainty; for the two commands being diametrically opposite, no man could ever have known which of the two might be obeyed with safety.

Would we but suffer them to reflect upon the divine commands, they must unavoidably see, that their worshipping of the Son of God, as merely delegated, with an inferior kind of worship, is absolute idolatry. When the first begotten was brought into the world it was said, "Let all the angels of God worship him," which they accordingly did at his birth. When he revealed himself to Israel, the Father gave command, that, "All men should honor the Son, even as they honored the Father." That is with the self-same honor, as is paid to the Father, on the foundation of his being one (in essence) with the Father. Whereas had the Father ordained divine honors, to be paid to any being of a different essence from himself, he would not only have overturned the first commandment, "Thou shalt have no other Gods before me," but have given his glory to another, contrary to

his own express declaration. I would not therefore have those sons of superior reason think it, at all strange, if at last they shall find themselves ranked with idolaters.

IMP. But, father, if I mistake not, you said, that with them, paganism is brought to as great perfection as ever it arrived at, in the Roman pantheon. How is that, sir? Seeing they are rational Christians?

INF. Yes, my son, they call themselves rational Christians, because they believe and teach, "That the world by wisdom may know the Almighty," and adorn their harangues with words, which mens wisdom teacheth; but they are pagans, notwithstanding, as will appear when you consider, that they worship more Gods than one. Arians and Socinians both agree to worship one, whom they say is truly and essentially God, and the king and Father of the other Deities. Besides this object of supreme adoration they have other two, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, whom they honor with inferior adoration, just as the ancients did the common Deities. I suppose, gentlemen, you will allow that the worship of two or three objects of different ranks, is as real paganism, as the worship of so many hundreds; but I choose to distinguish the moderns from others, by the name of Christian pagans, because they allow Jesus Christ to be one of their secondary Deities. I am greatly obliged to you, my brother Fastosus, for your assistance

so kindly given, to enable me to accomplish my purposes; without it I could not have brought my affairs to their present happy situation.

FAST. No brother, you could not; but you are at all times welcome to my assistance, in counteracting the simplicity of gospel truth. I myself should greatly suffer were the Arians and Socinians to discover what part we have in their rational religion; and I am not without my fears that the incapacity of the preachers for making proselytes, the dwindling away of their congregations, and the contempt in which they are in general held, will in time convince them, "That the world by wisdom knew not God," and so bring them to change their present system of rational religion for that of the cross of Jesus, which is truly rational, and ennobles every reasoning power of the human soul.

IMP. Ah, my sire! What a subtile spirit are you? With what laudable craftiness must you have acted, to succeed in introducing pagan idolatry amongst modern divines, even amongst protestant dissenters. I have long known, that the papists are pagans in disguise, but had no thought of rational Christians being so far in alliance with us.

DISC. Pagans in disguise, cousin! What do you mean? There is no mystery at all in your father's doctrine; nor is there much difference between the antient pagans, and modern pa-

pists. The principal difference is this. The popish Juno, whom they call the mother of God, is far greater in power, and more exalted in glory, than the wife of Jupiter the pagan deity. The pagan Juno, acted in all things subordinate to the will of her husband, the king and father of the gods, who bore absolute sway over the heavenly synod : but the popish Jupiter, acts in subordination to the will of his virgin mother. He rules the creation indeed ; but then he is still subject to maternal direction ; so that it is not God the saviour of sinners, but the virgin Mary, the popish Juno, who possesses absolute sovereignty ; and what good they expect at the hand of God, is expected as to be done in obedience to his virgin mother.

In all other things, there is little or no disparity between the ancient and modern pantheon worship. The pagans worshipped angels, whom they called gods, the papists worship them also, knowing them to be creatures. The first had their heroes and heroines whom they adored under the name of demigods ; the latter also have their heroes and heroines, whom they worship under the name of saints. The antients had their ambiguous oracles and lying wonders, and the moderns have both, in far greater abundance ; so that he must be blind indeed, who does not see amongst them undisguised paganism.

IMP. Then it must follow that, the papists

are greater friends to my father Infidelis, than the Arians and Socinians, because these bear something of the appearance of truth; but those have cast off both truth and its appearance.

INF. That is your wisdom again my son. Impiator would make but a blundering minister of state in my court, gentlemen. But my son, you may know, it is with us a maxim of policy, that "Whoever comes nearest the truth, and is notwithstanding destitute of it, is always capable of doing the most essential service to my interest." Popish paganism is by far too barefaced to succeed in England, where its absurdities have been so long detected. English protestants will not worship a god of the bakers making, whilst their women retain the art of making good plumb pudding, which will at any time be preferred to the sacramental wafer. But Arian and Socinian paganism is so subtilly invented, and so well refined, that it passeth with many for rational Christianity.

IMP. I find sir, you are under necessity as well as myself to act wisely, with craft and cunning, finding that the same device will not with all people, at all times succeed alike. We may sometimes, to some people, appear in our own infernal likeness, and at other times we are fain to put on a deep disguise in order to accomplish our designs. But no matter how, so that we have them safe at last. However,

gentlemen, there being such a prospect of plenty, I begin to fear there will scarcely be room left in hell for us devils.

INF. Another stroke of my son's wit. It is well Impiator, that your business is to tyran-nize only over the thoughtless part of the hu-man race, or you would be but of little service to our fraternity. But have you never heard, that Tophet is wide and large, without either brim or bottom? There is no fear of wanting room. Besides, wherever the fiends may happen to be, they are always at home, being sure to carry their hell along with them.

FAST. I have somewhere seen a map of that part of your dominions, brother, where the idolaters dwell; if you have got one about you, I should be glad to have a description of it.

INFID. I have sir, and am glad it is in my power to gratify my much honored brother. — You see sir, it is divided into two grand provinces, each inhabited by different sects of idol-worshippers. That province on the left contains the various sects of civil idolaters, and this on the right contains the many de-nominations of their elder brethren, the reli-gious idolaters. And I assure you, they are two bodies of people very respectable.

The province which contains the civil ido-laters, is divided into several counties, all of which are very populous. In the first county live the worshippers of vain pleasure, and this

county is divided into several regalities, in which the several sects or denominations of idolaters dwell, according to the diversity of their inclinations. The first regality is appointed to the worshippers of living creatures. This swarms with Jockies, and gamblers of the turf, both of noble and ignoble extraction. Along with them live the worshippers of foxes, hares, and hounds, a very jolly race I assure you, well skilled in the literature of the kennel. But it is better to be a slave in a Turkish galley, than held as a divinity in this regality, for adoration never fails to procure torture to the idol; as the panting of the hare, and the well-ploughed sides of the horse sufficiently demonstrate. A little nook of this regality is by royal mandate made over to sterile wives and maiden ladies, who for want of more agreeable objects of adoration, worship monkies, parrots, and lap-dogs. The second regality is the habitation of those who worship the dramatic poets, and their apes the players. At the shrines of those idols, the worshippers sacrifice health and virtue, under pretence of learning wisdom. They are a very fashionable and honored people, with whom legislators and guardians of public virtue are not ashamed to associate. Here you may find legislators patriotically sacrificing their own virtue, in order to protect that of the nation; their own estates, in order to assist in public economy; and faithlessly wasting their own time, in or-

der to teach industry to the inferior ranks of subjects.

In the second county, you will find all the worshippers of false honor; a set of gentry extremely divided in their sentiments relative to the object of their adoration. One holy father falls down prostrate, like Cardinal Wolsey, before the triple crown and pontifical dignity. A second is equally devout at the shrine of a cardinal's hat; and a third, less aspiring, pays his devotions to a bishop's mitre or prelatic robes, and the highest of his present ambition is a bishoprick. Other reverend gentlemen offer a more humble worship to a deanry, prebend, or vicarage.

It is very observable, that in this county people never worship that to which they have already attained; but having compassed their purpose, burn incense to the idol next in rank, and thus the worshipper goes on, if death and disappointment do not prevent him, till he has worshipped every shrine in the pantheon.

For instance, whilst a curate, a vicarage is the idol; the vicarage obtained, it gives place to a prebend or deanry; which once enjoyed, they also in their turn give place to a bishoprick: that to an archbishoprick, which is the principal idol of the English. But in other countries there are idols of superior rank, so that the moment an archbishoprick is obtained, incense smokes to a cardinal's hat; which also obtained, loses its worshipper, who is now convert-

ed to the worship of the triple crown, the great god and father of all the other idols.

Nor are the laity less devout than their reverend brethren, for one man worships universal empire, like Lewis of France and some others; but it is said that George of Britain is an apostate from this religion. Another worships a crown and sceptre, like the descendant of a certain bricklayer; and many adore the place of prime minister, chancellor of the kingdom, first lord of the treasury, with every other place of honor and trust in government. Some you shall see fall prostrate before a star and garter, whilst others are all obedience to a coronet. The husband lies in the dust before "his honor," whilst his wife in raptures adores "her ladyship." His lordship is bended to by one, and another pays all his devotion to his grace.

In this country, you may find some men religious enough to worship a corporal's knot, or a serjeant's halberd. Some worship an ensign's sash, others a lieutenant's commission, whilst the captain is absolutely as much devoted to a regiment, as his colonel is to a marshal's staff.

The third country is the dwelling of those who worship their own bodies, than which, I presume there is not a more ravenous idol in the synod. Around the shrine of this god, stand the baker, brewer, pastry-cook, confectioner, distiller, weaver, and male and fe-

male taylors. Hard by are a constellation of the softer sex prostrate before an Indian shrub, the leaves of which are in great veneration. At no great distance, are a cloud of worshippers of Virginia tobacco ; they are divided into no less than four different sects. The first of whom worship the tobacco in the neat leaf cut small, or well rolled together. The second worship it, after it is well ground into flour. The third put it through the fire to the dear sensation. And the fourth are of such a catholic disposition, that they worship the dearly beloved tobacco in all its forms. Of this sect the LISTENER professes himself.

The belly is worshipped by many, as the principal god, and so profuse are they in their offerings, that its altar is sometimes almost overturned, and the idol greedy as it is, is unable to bear the fruits of their devotion. The sect of gluttons, a very devout race, ransack both earth and sea to bring plenty of offerings to the idol ; and that of drunkards, in no less devotion, pour on the wines in such profusion, that all the surrounding trenches are gorged to the brim. This same idol, differs exceedingly from most other objects of idolatrous worship ; for when it has swelled to excess in the drink offering, it invites the brain to share in the feast, to which it presents every vapourish effluvia, whilst it reserves for its own use only the parts excrementitious. Moreover, this same belly is apt to resent the profusion

of its worshippers, and sends forth the bluest plagues, most chilling agues, burning, putrid and malignant fevers, with all manner of acute and chronical distempers amongst the worshippers, and thus provides employment for gentlemen of the faculty; whose business, positively would be worse than that of a cobler, but for the religion of belly worshipping.

In the fourth county dwell the worshippers of gold and large possessions, some of whom you shall find lying prostrate in the deepest devotion to a fine well situated house and garden; others worshipping a fertile estate and well stored barns, a flock of fleecy sheep, or an herd of fattening bullocks. One man adores the brace of nags which hurl him from place to place, whilst his friend is prostrate before a splendid retinue. Moidores as well as English coin is a splendid idol, and attracts the attention of many, whilst some adore a coalpit, or a mine of leaden ore.

Had I time, I would give you a more full account of the religious idolaters; but as business is urgent, I shall only touch upon some of their gods. The greatest of which is his holiness the present pope, who dispenseth blessing and cursing, casteth down and exalteth at his pleasure. This god who is exalted above all that is called god, issueth dispensations and pardons, for money and price, contrary to the manner of the God of heaven. The one pardons and gives salvation freely of grace, but

the other sells his pardons as dear as he can. Next to his holiness, on the right hand, stands the popish Juno, or virgin Mary, whose powerful command of the God of nature is greatly adored by every zealous papist. On the left hand stands a Jesus Christ of wood, whom the papists also highly revere; for they are almost to distraction fond of wooden Deities. Some indeed have a Jesus Christ made of gold or silver, and others more lowly, worship a paper Saviour; but the most humble devotion is paid to the gods which the baker makes. These are the most ravenous idolaters in the whole world, for with the greatest eagerness, and devout veneration they eat the object of their adoration. Thousands of these breaden gods are devoured annually, and as soon as devoured, they are replaced by others from the sacred ovens. The people, worship, and service of the true Jesus of Nazareth they abhor and persecute, with as much fury as ever their ancestors the Romish pagans did. But if their own goldsmiths, carvers, or statuaries happen to produce a handsome Jesus Christ, or a mother of God, the country will presently wonder after it in the most profound adoration.

FAST. I have sometimes thought, brother, that the popish religion is the religion of Molech inverted. That voracious idol was used to devour the children of his worshippers;

but here the greedy worshippers devour their god after he is well baked in an oven.

INF. The antient pagans were even foolish enough, in giving their children to that greedy devil, Molech; and the papists are not much wiser in worshipping the works of the artificer, or believing that they can eat their maker. Here are likewise the greatest variety of venerable relics, such as St. Peter's beard, the ear of St. Francis, the milk of the virgin, with a thousand fooleries besides, all of which are in some sense deified.

Besides these already mentioned, there dwell in this province, all who worship their ancestors, which renders the country very populous. I mean those who hold the canons, confessions, and liturgies composed by their ancestors, to be nearly equal to the scriptures in authenticity. Likewise those who are of this or that persuasion merely, because it was the faith of their progenitors, without giving themselves the trouble of searching the scripture to know the truth of the doctrine. 'Tis also here that the worshippers of the sacerdotal livery dwell. I mean those who venerate a man merely for the sake of his gown and cassock, without inquiring whether his doctrine and conversation render him venerable.

But I should tire your patience, was I to give you a minute description of my vastly extended country, as well as lead you to imitate

the sloth of the children of men. I shall therefore beg leave here to desist. At the usual time I will meet you, business calls me hence at present.

DIALOGUE XVII.

PRIVY to their appointment, I made business give way to curiosity, and I was as punctual in my attendance as they were in theirs. At the time before agreed to, they assembled, resumed their seats, and Fastosus thus began.

FAST. It is true, sir, your son Avaro, hath greatly exceeded my expectations, and proves himself to be an expert devil ; he will, I think, do honor to the name of Infidelis, and may greatly contribute to the flourishing estate of the kingdom of pride. I should be glad if Avaro might now a little enlarge upon the hints he has already given, that we may further see the prosperity of our general interest.

DISC. That will be very grateful to me, cousin Avaro, as your sordid and griping influences, have the most happy effect upon the reign of contention. How have I been delighted, when one of your slaves has dropt into the grave leaving behind him vast possessions, by the discord I have sown amongst his children and kinsfolks. Your slaves dare not think of dying and entering into another world, therefore it sometimes happens, that after the muckworm has been by every means, and every kind of rapiné, scraping wealth together

for many years, he drops into eternity without leaving behind him any authentic direction how his plunder is to be disposed of. This gives me a fair opportunity of setting his relations together by the ears, about who shall get most of the miser's effects to himself; and I have the happiness frequently, of planting irreconcilable enmity in the heart of one brother and sister against another, which you know is a comfortable sight to our infernal nobility.

Sometimes the griping miser, that enemy to himself and all mankind, is over persuaded to make his will, though secretly hoping, he shall not die for a great while yet to come; and then the case is very little altered: for when the wretch goes to the place appointed for the covetous, his will is very unsatisfactory to some of his relations; one has too much, and the other has too little left him. Here, disagreeable altercation succeeds the funeral obsequies, and division and everlasting disgust sums up the whole. Unless indeed, that relation who has too little bequeathed to him, should call in the gentlemen of the law to decide the matter in some court of judicature, and who, having fleeced both the fools as handsomely as the nature of the thing would admit of, refer them at last to an arbitration.

I assure you, cousin, I scarcely ever see one of your industrious slaves, but I flatter a hope of having some employment in his family no

his demise, nor do I know any other real use that the miser's ill gotten money is of to society, besides sowing discord amongst friends and relations. The wretch meanly robs his own back and belly, as well as all he deals with, to answer purposes no more valuable by his having. But I prevent you, cousin.

AVAR. I cannot easily depart from the tent of the scarlet lady, whose name is mystic Babylon, without making farther honorable mention of her prudent children. The wise disposal of purgatorial fire has been already exemplified, and the dispensation and pardon market has been glanced at; but one way of getting money besides these I shall now instance. I have laid my claim to the popish clergy in general, but of them all, there are none who exceed the worthy lords the inquisitors in veneration of my golden image. This religion of the golden image was first invented by the clergy of Babylon, and I assure you to this day the clergy of Babylon invariably follow it. But the inquisitors, of all others, are the most zealous devotees of this golden god, first set up by the parsons of Babylon.

Never did an eagle look out for a dove, nor an hawk for a sparrow, with greater vigilance than their lordships are wont to look out for a prey. If within their jurisdiction there happens to be a stranger, whose circumstances are prosperous, and who is likely to be a good bone for their reverences to pick; it shall go

hard but they will provoke him, by some of their emissaries, to say something against the inquisitive tribunal, which in some countries is deemed the unpardonable sin. No sooner has the insinuating priest, by indirect means obtained matter of accusation, but he makes information in the holy office, before the fathers, who on hearing the blessed report, are as much delighted as the wolf when he has fanged a prey. The merchant is apprehended, his estate confiscated; he is immured in the prison cells till consumed, either by famine or vermin, otherwise he is tortured privately to death by the hands of their sanctified ruffians.

One instance of the many, which I might produce, shall serve to exemplify the equity of the inquisitors. When Syracuse was in its glory, there was one Bellarius, a foreign merchant, who in the course of business had amassed great riches; and who, at the same time was so circumspect in all his ways, that even the eye of an emissary of the office, could find nothing, of which to accuse him to the tribunal. Thus he lived in reputation and affluence for many years, to the great impatience of the holy inquisitors, who could find no plausible pretence, by which they might fang his substance with their rapacious talons.

Bellarus had an only child, a lady about seventeen. Her person was the perfection of symmetry, and her mind a copy of the purest virtue. By her they found means to accom-

plish their purposes, and bring complicated ruin on the unhappy parent. The family retired to peaceful repose, when one night alarmed about one in the morning, first by the approach of a coach, and then by a smart rapping at the gate. Bellarius from within asked, "Who is there?" Was answered, the "holy Inquisition;" down stairs he run, flew to the gates in obedience to the dread tribunal, and opened to receive those ministers of darkness. Understanding they were come for his daughter, in farther obedience to those leaders of the church, he went himself up to her chamber, brought her down trembling as she was, and delivered her into the hands of the horrid ravishers, who carried her off to the seraglio in the office of Inquisition. Where for the present we leave her, through fear of death seduced from her virtue by those pretended patrons of religion, and return to the unhappy disconsolate father.

IMP. Well, brother, I find then the priests of Rome are not so much addicted to eunuchry as they pretend. 'Tis lawful it seems to ravish virgins, however unlawful it may be to have a married wife. I have often heard of the seraglio of princes, but not so often of the seraglio of priests, and those priests too, who of all others are the most zealous wonderers after the seven headed beast.

AVAR. Distressed and comfortless Bellarius remained at home; forsook all company and conversed only with the various cogitations of

his own forboding mind. At one time he conjectured that his hapless daughter, in some inadvertent moment, might have blasphemed either the wooden virgin Mary or the great high priest of Rome, or the holy inquisitors, in which case he gave her up for lost, and doomed her to fall a sacrifice. Yet could he scarcely forgive the rigour of that religion, which had in such a merciless manner ravished her from his fond embrace.

It was not long after this an Armenian merchant, said to be newly arrived in Syracuse, called on him, under pretence of buying a large assortment of goods. Generous and unsuspecting Bellarius, bid him welcome to his house during his stay ; which he after some seemingly modest apologies thankfully accepted. The pretended Armenian perceiving Bellarius to eat but little at supper, now and then inadvertently to slip a sigh, took occasion to rally him in a friendly manner, as if troubled with the hyp', advised him to cheer up and hope for better times.

Bellarius having but little relish for a jest, seriously replied, " No, sir, the hyp' is not my present disease, neither have my affairs in trade taken an adverse turn ; and yet there is one thing, which gives me great distress." The friendly Armenian was now more importunate to know his grievance, that he might at least sympathize with him in his affliction. Little suspecting that he was conflicting with priestly

subtilty ; he thought he might safely lodge his circumstances in a generous bosom of a merchant ; he replied, sir, I suppose you are a stranger in Syracuse ; as such let me advise you, as you value your life and liberty, to be careful of your words, and every part of your deportment during your abode, for this is a place of danger. I have sir, one only daughter, the perfect image of her lovely mother, whom I had the misery to bury but a few months ago. I know not by what temptation ; but my poor girl has said something dishonorable either of the lady of Loretto, his holiness the pope, or their lordships the Inquisitors, for which she is imprisoned in the holy office, and I suppose must answer it with her life.

Oh sir, I hope not, said the Armenian, the lady's youth will intercede for her, and after some gentle admonition, your daughter will be returned to the house of her father.

Ah, sir ! rejoined disconsolate Bellarius, I cannot but fear, that her youth and beauty, are her greatest enemies and accusers. These are qualities capable of impressing the heart even of an inquisitor. If this is the case, my poor daughter is already either dead or debauched. Or should it happen, that any thing has been alleged against her religious conduct, there are instruments enough in the Inquisition, and their lordships want not skill to use them ; instruments sufficient to make an helpless virgin confess that, which even never entered her

thoughts; so that at all events, her death or dishonor is ensured. No sir, it is not possible for me to hope for better, seeing the least hint thrown out against the Inquisition, is condemned as unpardonable blasphemy.

It was not long after this discourse, before the Armenian feigned a necessity of going out; went streight to the Inquisition and made information, being a jesuit disguised as a merchant, and that very night a coach was sent to conduct Bellarius to the cells of their dreadful prison. Next day his effects were seized by order of the holy fathers, who now rejoiced that at last they had grasped the long wished for prey. Confined in an abominable cell, he was greatly annoyed by vermin; and being divers times examined by torture, he died with grief for his daughter, who, as she could never freely yield to the loathsome embrace of those murderers, in a few months tired their patience. Then one of their sanctified ruffians, first murdered her, and then burned her to ashes in the dry pan. It is amazing gentlemen, to what lengths the lust of money and women will carry men.

FAST. Indeed cousin, I think your friends the inquisitors bid fair for equalling the most subtil of our fraternity. Oh, what means of procuring wealth, have you taught their reverences of the Romish hierarchy? Selling of dispensations and pardons, begging of money for masses, &c. &c. are profitable articles, and

turn to a good account. But if I remember right you told me a few days since, your vassals are divided into several companies, or communities, and that people of all kingdoms, ranks and professions, are at this day worshippers of the god Avaro. I should be glad to hear something farther about them.

AVAR. I did so, sir, and shall be ready farther to oblige you, if to give you a brief view of our corporation, which like all other towns corporate, consists of divers companies, will do it. The first of which is that of

The lawyers. A very wise set of gentlemen; who exceed the children of light, in the art of money-getting, as far as any of the inhabitants of our territories; of course they are held in great estimation, as gentlemen of the first intelligence. In our city of Avarice there is no knowledge deemed of any avail; no conduct accounted virtuous besides that of money-getting. He is always, the wisest, best, and most virtuous man who best succeeds in the lucrative art, whether in law, or in trade, or otherwise. There was a time you know, when the law was as streight, as clear, as a beam of light, and needed no expounding, so that every man was his own counsellor. But ever since the kings of England were kept prisoners under a guard, lest truth should become familiar to the royal ear, the case has been quite altered; now it is so full of pleas and demurrers, doubts and exceptions, &c. that it is a perfect

labyrinth ; dangerous for an honest man to enter. For in the lawyers company it is a standing rule, that, whether the plaintiff or defendant lose the cause, the lawyers on both sides are sure to be considerable gainers. Indeed, it is very seldom, but they manage the matter so, that all parties except themselves are losers, and if he who gains the trial, finds himself in the end to be a loser, how do you think it must fare with the wretch, against whom the verdict is given ? If an honest man has a mind to purchase an estate ever so fairly, and pay for it ever so honestly, he will find it a difficult matter, so to secure his title ; but if any succeeding heir be bred to the law, or heiress be married to a lawyer, he may run a risk of being jostled out of his property, by some knavish quirk in law, without any allowance made either for the estate or its improvements.

Indeed sir, it may be said of my faithful disciples, the lawyers, attorneys, bailiffs, &c. that they pay as little regard to truth as the greatest of ourselves. Right and wrong, equity and oppression, are no objects of their regard, providing the case will yield good advantage, and bring large grist to their mill ; an instance of this if you please, gentlemen, I shall give you.

Contumelius was a Yorkshire gentleman, of distinguished birth and ample fortune, but somewhat a-kin to the mad Macedonian. His country-seat stood by the side of a lane, through

which neighbouring farmers passed with their teams for time immemorial. But so much passing and repassing, of the whistling clowns following their waggons, at last proved very offensive to the worshipful 'Squire, so that, he resolved to remove the intolerable nuisance by blocking up the way. A gate was accordingly put up, and fastened with a padlock, effectually to stop the clownish passengers from passing as before, and turn them by a way considerably more distant.

As soon as the 'Squire's proceedings reached the ear of Mr Loveright, a neighbouring farmer, he ordered his waggon to drive directly to the gate, and finding it lock'd, took an axe, which he had brought with him for that purpose, and to the great mortification of 'Squire Contumelius hewed it to pieces. His worship in a rage, posted to Mr Deceitful, a very eminent lawyer in the neighbouring town for his advice. The worthy lawyer, finding this a proper occasion of serving his own inserest, advised the 'Squire to scnd for a writ, commence an action against the farmer for his intolerable insolence. In a few days the writ was served on Loveright, who, immediately waited on lawyer Deceitful, in order if possible to compromise the matter.

He no sooner entered the office, than Mr Deceitful took him aside and thus addressed him, "I am heartily sorry my good Mr Loveright, that I have been in a manner obliged by

his worship Contumelius, to send for a writ against you. But I assure you, sir, in my opinion your side of the question is by much the safest, and might I advise you, it would be to stand a trial, and by no means submit to a compromise. Knowing the farmer to be a man of substance and resolution, continued he, there is no bearing with such insolent treatment. For my own part Mr Loveright, I would much rather you had been my client, on the present occasion, than the giddy 'Squire, but he first applied to me and insisted on my doing what I have done. If you please you may apply to my brother Falshood, who is skilful as any man, and as honest as any lawyer I know. In the mean while, sir, you may depend on me as your real friend, ready to serve you in every thing consistent with my reputation."

As soon as Loveright was departed, Mr Deceitful took horse, and rode directly to the 'Squire's house; told him the farmer had been with him heartily repented of his folly, and was very desirous of coming to terms of agreement. But were the case mine, said he, I would listen to no terms of accommodation, but punish his insolence to the utmost rigour of law. The low life fellow, having got forward in the world, has forgotten himself; and if suffered now to escape with impunity, he will be the pest of the neighbourhood. Thus the worthy lawyer irritated both parties, till

he had made sure of an assize hearing, that, in the debate, he might likewise insure to himself a sum very considerable. For he knew very well, that if ever a difference falls into the insatiable maw of the court, it will never be disgorged till all costs of suit are amply paid off; for it is impossible for my mercenary scribblers to give any credit. Let them act justly or unjustly, they make sure of their fees; and as the one party must necessarily lose, both counsellor and attorney, take care to father the miscarriage of the cause, on something which the client has done, which he ought not; or omitted, which he ought to have done: and notwithstanding all their fraud and deceit, both of them come off good honest lawyers. The

II. Company, and next in reputation to that of the lawyers, is the parson's company, which is also very flourishing and reverend. That you may not mistake my meaning; by parsons I intend all in general, of every denomination, who are ministers merely for the sake of a living; more especially.

1. All who profess to my lord bishop, that they are moved by the Holy Ghost, to take upon them the office of a deacon, when in reality it is the hope of a benefice, by which they are stimulated; and who afterwards, in the course of their pulpiteering, tell the people that it is enthusiasm in any person, to expect to receive the Holy Ghost in these days.

2. All who, sustaining the sacerdotal cha-

racter, lead men into sin, or harden those who are insensible, either by conniving at the sins of their people, or by being guilty of the like themselves. These gentlemen are pretty numerous.

3. All who act rigorously towards their parishioners, in regard to temporal things, who evidently shew more concern about tithes and offerings, than about the everlasting welfare of their people.

4. All in holy orders who, through covetousness, idleness, or any other unjustifiable cause, with-hold from their people, the stated ministration of the word and ordinances. Set a mark upon them, for they are all my disciples.

5. Wherever you meet with a gentleman in holy orders, who is so far above the bulk of his auditory, that he will not condescend to converse even with the meanest, about the state of his soul, the work of the spirit and way of salvation, such are idol shepherds, unnatural pastors, and altogether devoted to the god Avaro.

IMP. So then, cousin, I find you have parsons of more denominations than one; they are not all engrossed by the established churches in England and on the continent it seems. Yet I meet with many who with great warmth will vindicate their own denomination by wholesale, and deem it little less than blasphemy, to suppose that they embrace any thing erroneous. Yet none more ready to censure,

and condemn those who are of a different persuasion in religious things.

AVAR. The truth is, my parsons are scattered abroad, among all sects of professors; for the time is not yet come, that any one sect can justly assert, that none of their ministers have any other object in view but the glory of God, and the good of mankind. Nor will the time commence, before that important question, “ who shall be the greatest;” is finally decided, which it is thought will be a great while first, seeing it hath already puzzled the schoolmen and leaders of the church for sixteen centuries back. But to return to the parsons company, wherever you meet with a clergyman who answers the description I have given, you need not ask him whether he is a churchman or a dissenter. All you have to do, is to put Belzebub’s mark upon his forehead, and take assurance of him, that at a certain time, he shall not fail to visit the nether regions, and take his abode in the infernal palace.

In this very populous company, there is great diversity of ranks, even where there is an equality of genius; for some having scarcely finished their apprenticeship are inducted into livings and instantly commence rectors and tithe gatherers. Others for want of friends, are obliged much against their inclination to continue underlings all the length of a tedious life. I have seen a handsome person ere now, riding upon four or five steeples at once, and having

more in expectation; whilst his fellow student, could scarcely procure brown bread and Welch butter. And amongst all the pluralists in my acquaintance, I know not of one that has got livings now; but give, give, is still their fervent prayer to my lord bishop, or some other patron who has a benefice to bestow. Many indeed think they should be quite contented, if they had but one more benefice added to what they now enjoy; but I can tell you, could they come by another, there would still be another wanting. It is much, now so many clergymen find themselves uneasy in the trammels, if they do not at last take it into their heads to persuade the legislature, that a clergyman cannot preach in three or four churches at one and the same time. And that it is not perfectly consistent, either with Christianity or reason, that one clergyman should have three or four livings, whilst another has none. Should it come to this, my company must be terrible sufferers.

IMP. One would really think, if the cure of souls is as weighty a concern as some people make it, the parsons would not be so fond of pluralities; of adding living to living, and parish to parish.

AVAR. The cure of souls, forsooth! My parsons care not who take the souls. The fleece, cousin, the fleece, attracts their attention. Give an avaricious parson the fleece; and you make fairies of the souls of the parishioners if you will. Many of them do very

little of the priest's office, besides collecting the tithes and offerings ; at which they are wonderfully dextrous. But as to preaching, they have no notion of it, and less still of visiting the sick, were they even in the jaws of death. I assure you, gentlemen, those idol-shepherds are of the greatest use to our government. The interest of hell could not prosper as it does, were we not well befriended by many gentlemen in holy orders.

FAST. Indeed cousin, I have often thought, that without their assistance, we should be ill put to it, to maintain our ground against the votaries of Immanuel. What posting to and from hell is there amongst our sable brethren, when but one faithful and zealous gospel minister arises in a nation ? You may remember, when Luther and Calvin brake the chain of the pope and devil, lifted up the voice of the gospel trumpet, which resounded through the bowels of hell and made the pillars of our infernal kingdom totter, what hurly burly we all were in ? What deep consultations in the divan ? What diligence in action with our forces upon earth.

AVAR. True, sir, but times are much altered for the better ; many a well paid parson now-a-days, is so obliging as to sing a lullaby to his people, when he finds them snoring in the sleep of security, and will suffer no man to attempt their awakening. He kindly tells them, " that they may sleep on now, and take

their rest, for the wolf is gone out of the country, and will not for a great while return. Let no man disturb you with idle notions, for you may all go asleep to heaven without ever knowing what conversion means."

INF. it is admirable what power these same gentlemen have gotten over reason and religion ; I have often thought, that if ever they were to read their Bibles with attention, they could not be off from seeing that they themselves are the identical persons intended by the idle, idol shepherds, and unfaithful watchmen, against whom so many curses are denounced in scripture. The idle shepherds, you know, are such who feed and adorn themselves with the spoils of the flock, which is suffered to perish unwarned, and to die for lack of knowledge. The idol shepherd is that lordly priest, that downy doctor, who keeps at an awful distance from men of ordinary rank, and is too much of the gentleman to give himself any concern about the souls of his parishioners.

Many of those idol shepherds I know, who possess some hundreds, ay, some of them thousands per annum, who will not so much to ask one of their cure, whether he intends to go to heaven or hell at death, or whether he serves God or the devil ; yet if a parishioner die, they will keep as penetrating a look-out for their fees, as an eagle for his prey, and seize it with equal eagerness. Moreover, for the sake of this same fee, they will own the de-

ceased for a brother, which privilege was always denied him whilst alive, unless he should indeed have happened to be one of the fat of the flock, who was capable of yielding a double fleece.

AVAR. It is the fleece, sir, which my disciples regard, and not the flock ; how have I been diverted sometimes, both at church and meeting-house, to hear the parson, with an air the most supercilious and contemptful, railing the most useful of God's ministers, as enthusiasts, fanatics, and methodists : ah ! said I to myself, what poor honest devils were those of old, who confess Christ and his disciples, and thus declared to the sons of Sceva, " Jesus we know, and Paul we know, but who are you ?"

Sometimes I hear them crying with vehemence, against the divinity of Immanuel; one making him some kind of a super-angelical being, and another asserting that he is only a man like themselves. Then say I, what a pusillanimous spirit was that same devil-legion, who without receiving either tithe or offering, confessed Jesus of Nazareth to be the only Son of God, to whom the scriptures ascribe every divine honor. But these parsons are well paid for confessing him, and yet deny him with the utmost insolence.

There is never a day but I hear some of this company charging the lie upon one text or other of the Bible. One tells his people that

there is no such thing, as one being chosen to salvation more than another, but that the love of God is equal unto, and upon all men, whether Jew or gentile, t^{urk} or pagan, papist or protestant; nay then say I, master parson, you are become a dissenter from your own seventeenth article. And to speak within compass, there are at least a thousand pulpits in the church occupied by such dissenters.

Then I hear others railing against those who preach salvation by grace; and at the same time assuring their people, that they must be saved by their own holiness and good works. Very well, say I, then I have my desire, for upon these terms they will never be saved at all: But still I am at a loss, how they dare so barefacedly give the lie to Paul the apostle, who taught the church, that "By grace they were saved through faith, and that not of themselves, but the gift of God." I hear many clergymen of the established church, in entering upon the service, thus address the majesty of heaven, "Lord cleanse thou the thoughts of our hearts, by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit;" and in less than an hour after, telling their parishioners, that it is mere enthusiasm in any man to expect in these days, to be at all influenced by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

So glaring the contradictions, which sometimes they are guilty of, that I tremble with fear, lest the people should be convinced of

the truth ; but these are favourable times, gentlemen, very favourable ; for the greatest part of the people have something else to think of when they go to church, besides either preaching or prayer.

When I hear the parson, whether churchman or dissenter, telling his people how holy and pure the heart of man is by nature ; how aptly formed for sentiments of the most exalted piety, and for entertaining the love of God ; I am wonderfully at a loss to know, how he came by more extensive knowledge of mankind than Jesus Christ, who expressly taught, that whatsoever defileth the man, proceeds out of the heart. Your influences, Fastosus, are of excellent use, in keeping them where they are ; you take care to persuade each of them separately, that of all others his own knowledge is the most refined ; and hence it is, that Goodwin, Owen, Charnock, and all such authors, are considered as weak though well-meaning divines.

It is very diverting to hear my parsons boasting of their superior knowledge, even when by their ministrations it is plain, that they are acquainted with almost any writings, better than those of inspiration ; when their audiences dwindle away to nothing, and the few people who abide by them are destitute of all religion. Did they but know half as much as the most illiterate devil of our fraternity, they would at least believe that there may be a pos-

sibility of their mistaking the way, and that after all their pretensions to superior knowledge, they may run some risk of a final miscarriage. But as our good friends the Roman doctors, are wont to say, "Ignorance is the mother of devotion;" so say I of my parsons, "Ignorance is the spring of all their knowledge;" and whilst my father Infidelis can keep them ignorant, my uncle Fastosus can easily puff them up with a sense of the clearness of their heads, and goodness of their hearts; so that I can do very well with them, and retain them amongst our worshippers.

III. The next company in our corporation is that of the Straining Landlords, a very noble and reputable company indeed; notwithstanding, they are far from being opulent. In the days of yore, when luxury was but in little vogue, the freeholders were attended with fewer wants, and of course this company was less flourishing; but since these happy days commenced, in which people of quality are trained up in absolute idleness and dissipation; in which virtue is of no account, and luxury, pride, and dissoluteness, are arrived at their zenith; the people of quality are amazingly poor, and are attended with an undescribable train of necessities. What is very remarkable, their pride has grown in a perfect proportion to their poverty, so that now it is an established law amongst them, to look upon themselves as of a different blood from the rest of mankind.

Indeed you cannot affront a person of quality worse, than by likening him to one of those, who are called vulgar creatures ; notwithstanding, by the way, it is those same vulgar creatures which enable persons of rank and fashion, to support the dignity of their station ; and were there no vulgar creatures, there would also be no ladies of quality.

This distinction which the quality pay to themselves, is of the utmost use in my administration, as will appear from the following story.

I went one day to the house of Sir Fop Mortalis, a very famous gentleman in the country, with a design to pay my devoirs to madam Mortalis, his lady ; a gentlewoman who abhors to haye the least comparison made, betwixt her and any person whatever of inferior rank. The chamber-maid informed her mistress, that good Mr Prudence waited below, desiring to speak with her ladyship, if convenient ; the lady soon descended, and compliments passed on either side, she conducted me into her parlour, where she and I had the following dialogue.

LADY. Good Mr Prudence, you have been a very great stranger ! It is now many months since I saw you at our house ; but I am glad to see you now, and I wish in my heart Sir Fop Mortalis had been at home.

*PRUDENCE. Urgent business, madam, demands my attendance so much elsewhere, that

I cannot so frequently as I could wish, pay my respects to Sir Fop and my lady Mortalis. But now, madam, I am come, if possible to rectify a growing mistake amongst mankind ; and must tell your ladyship, that I am heartily sorry to see the world arrived at such a pitch of ambition as it is now. Indeed, my lady, it is become a very difficult matter, in a concourse of people, to distinguish between the farmers and tradesmen's wives, and ladies of birth and fortune ; nor can we more easily distinguish between their several children. Why, madam, the farmers and tradesmen's children are all masters and misses ; young gentlemen and ladies now-a-days. I know not, for my part, what the world will come to, if some measures are not speedily taken to prevent the confounding of baseness with dignity.

When I was last at church, I was surprised to see, as I thought, Miss Mortalis, your daughter, there ; well knowing that neither Sir Fop himself, nor any of his family, go often to any place of public worship. Because you know, my lady, few of you great folks love the tedious duties of religion.

LADY. Not we indeed ; give us the cards, or musical entertainments for our money. We hate their whining, doleful cant ; let them choose religion, who have taste for nothing more polite. We'll have none of it, I assure you, Mr Prudence.

PRUD. I know it my lady, I know it, and

am mightily pleased with your determination. But as I was telling your ladyship, being at church, as soon as service was over, I said to a man who sat in the pew with me, “ I am surprised to see Miss Mortalis at church to-day. Do you think, sir, that any body has been daring enough to tell her that she really is a mortal ? ” To which the plain countryman, in his own clownish way, replied, “ Miss Mortalis at church quoth-a—no, no, sir, you are quite mistaken, for Sir Fop’s family are people of quality, and therefore meddle none with religion. What should they do at church, seeing they fear no hell, regard not God, and believe not in the devil ; as for heaven, Sir Fop is willing to leave that to the poor, and desires no greater happiness for himself and his, than is implied in an earldom.”

LADY. That is, indeed, what Sir Fop has long been soliciting, and it is believed is now very near obtaining.

PRUD. But, said I to the fellow, pray who is that young lady whom I took for Miss Mortalis ? Poh, lady quoth-a—why ’tis John Till-ground’s daughter, o’ the Five Elms. Till-ground’s daughter ! said I, you surprize me ; she is as finely drest, as I have seen Miss Mortalis when going to a ball. And pray, continued I, who is yonder lady, with the French head-dress and furred cardinal ? I thought you had had no people of quality in this parish, besides Sir Fop’s family. No, sir, returned

he, we have none who are such by birth, but we have many who are quality by their dress. The lady, sir, that you enquire after is, Mrs Watson, the landlady at the Three Tuns.

Well, madam, I followed them out of church, and was amazed to see the plaitings of hair, the tires of ruffles, and the labyrinthian furbeloes with which the women were decorated. Indeed, my lady, if the world holds on but a few years in its present career, we shall not be able to distinguish betwixt the highest and the lowest ranks of people.

LADY. To be sure, sir, the world is now at a sad pitch of pride and ambition, for people of fashion can do nothing as to dress, gesture, manner of speech, or living, but we are mimicked by those vulgar creatures.

PRUD. It must undoubtedly be considered as an insufferable insult upon people of breeding, when they are thus taken off by the vulgar. But madam, I have a scheme to propose, which if adopted, will effectually correct their insolence, and soon oblige John Till-ground and Timothy Turf's daughters to lay aside their furbeloes, ruffles, and tea-table, and betake themselves to their spinning wheels.

LADY. What is it? I pray you, good Mr Prudence, be so obliging; I beg you would, sir?

PRUD. Indeed, madam, your farmers are all become gentlemen of late; they talk of for-

tunes for their children, and consider themselves as very little inferior to the 'Squire himself; but let me tell you, madam, the fault is not so much in the farmers, as in the landlords themselves, who let their farms upon terms by far too low and easy. There is this same John Tillground, and his neighbour Timothy Turf, as I am informed, have both of them money lying at interest, when my worthy and right honorable lord noble, a gentleman of the first quality, is obliged to pawn his plate for cash, to pay off the four thousand pounds he lost the other night at cards; and whilst his gentle neighbour, 'Squire Fitzfolly, is obliged to fell his timber to stop the horrid gap, which his malevolent stars opened at Newmarket-races, where the gamblers of rank and quality occasionally try their fortune.

'Tis insufferable, madam, that the farmer's circumstances should be easy, whilst people of fashion know not how to keep off the duns from their doors. What right has any body to any thing besides slavery, except people of quality? Were not those vulgar creatures originally designed as your slaves, madam? and yet for any thing I see, they will soon be on a level with you, unless some method, lucky enough to prevent it, is speedily devised.

LADY. Ah, sir, I fear it indeed. If you do know of any suitable means to prevent it, I beg, good Mr Prudence, you will inform me?

PRUD. There is only one way that I know of, madam, and that is to raise their rents to the uttermost. As every lease expires, it will be an easy matter for Sir Fop, in the renewal of it, to advance the rent as high as he pleases. The slaves dare not go away; and if they should, there will be others foolish enough to agree to any terms, rather than miss of a farm. This done, and all your tenants settled upon the racked farms, if any one of them happens to rear a handsome colt, let Sir Fop himself, or young master, fall in love with it, demand it of its owner for so much, never exceeding half its value; he may privately grumble, but dare not refuse, for fear of offending his honor. By these means, and others which occasion will suggest, you may make them all humble enough.

LADY. Most excellently spoken, good Mr Prudence. Then, Tillground's wife will be obliged to sell her china ware to procure rags for her brats; the daughter must take to her wheel, and wash-tub, and my son master Thomas, will ride a better horse than he now does. This scheme will certainly conquer the ambition of the farmers; but what will it do for the tradesmen, good Mr Prudence; they will still continue an eye-sore?

PRUD. Indeed, madam, the same scheme will produce very humbling effects, upon tradesmen of every kind; though I dare not assert, that you will ever be able perfectly to

subject to your ambition and avarice, that honorable body of merchants, whom you affectedly call cits. No, madam, I am afraid that nobility itself must give place to the public spirit of the merchant; yet even them you may greatly injure, and prevent their being of such essential service to their country, as otherwise they might be. But as to inland trade, by racking your tenants in the manner prescribed, you may absolutely destroy it. That you may see the utility of my scheme, I shall a little explain it to your ladyship.

If the farmers are racked to the utmost, they will be obliged to sell the produce of their lands, at an exorbitant price, otherwise it will be altogether out of their power to pay the stipulated rent. And besides selling their crops &c. for an advanced price, they will be obliged to abridge the wages of all their labourers, smiths, carpenters, &c.

By these means the farmer will find it very difficult to live, and of course will rarely visit the mercer's and draper's shops; and as for his labourers and workmen, they will find but little money to lay out in clothes; especially if their children be numerous, as the demands of the back must always give place to the louder calls of the belly. And as you know, my lady, sterility very rarely dwells in the labourer's cottage; it is unknown what misery you may happily introduce amongst them, by the scheme proposed. The draper's goods,

will lie upon his hands, unless indeed he is pleased to give credit to the poor? if the former, he will be sparing of his orders; and if the latter, we shall soon have him a bankrupt, so that he will be effectually ruined.

You see, madam, that here we affect the manufacturer, equally with the farmer and shopkeeper; for when the retail trade is ruined by the dearness of provisions, the manufacturer will find little call for his goods; the issue of which will be, the disbanding of many of his journeymen, and abridging the wages of the rest. The disbanded journeymen being incapable of finding employment, and not having learned the art of living like the camelion, on the air, will be drove to thieving, by which means America will be peopled, and *Tyburn Chronicle* rendered respectable.

As to the manufacturer himself, his capital being soon converted into manufactured goods, he will be obliged to sell them under their value, that he may keep up his credit with the merchant, and be able to carry on a little trade, vainly hoping that times may alter for the better.

LADY. Indeed, sir, your scheme is very feasible, and yet there is one thing that will put the manufacturer absolutely out of our power. I mean, sir, the exportation of their manufacture. I don't know how it is, but these cits of merchants can send goods any

where, and they, sir, will support the manufacturer.

PRUD. No, madam, I assure you, my scheme, if cordially adopted, and executed with vigour, will put it absolutely out of the merchant's power. There is nothing can recommend the English manufacture at a foreign market, but the price being inferior to that of other nations. Now, if an Englishman must pay twice as dear for his provision in his own country, as a Frenchman does in his, it is easy to see that either journeymen's wages must in England be double to what they are in France, or the journeymen must starve; which few Englishmen are fond of doing. The consequence of this is, the French manufacturer can send his goods to a foreign market upon better terms than an Englishman, and of course destroy all the foreign trade of the English nation. Thus, madam, I have pointed out a method by which, you people of fashion, in order to support your own grandeur, may suck the blood of all inferior ranks of people, and make the British subjects absolutely slaves, even in a country which boasts its freedom. Nay more, this is a method by which you may ruin the most flourishing nation in the world.

LADY. Spoke like an angel, good Mr Prudence. I protest, upon honor, I will not sleep till I have consulted Sir Fop on the matter.

AVAR. I took my leave of her ladyship, who could not rest till she had communicated

the matter to her acquaintances, and they to their acquaintances, and so they again to theirs, that it had very soon made the tour of Great Britain and Ireland ; an ordinance was instituted in the company of avaricious landlords, that in every future lease, the farmers should be racked to the last extremity. This ordinance has been universally complied with by the whole company ; so that there is reason to hope, in time, all the blessed consequences proposed, will arise from it, as you may see to what an exorbitant price all manner of provisions is already arrived. What may not be expected from such hopeful beginnings ?

FAST. A noble company indeed, and near a-kin to our destroying clan. And yet many of them set up for patriots, even when they are drawing ruin upon the nation, by their pride, luxury, and avarice.

DIALOGUE XVIII.

CONTAINING

Wholesome Instructions to the Ladies.

Fastosus.

No, Avaro; know assuredly that you are not more in esteem with the Dutch than myself. It were strange indeed if I had no concern with Mynheer.

AVAR. Indeed, sir, to see Mynheer equipped in his holiday clothes, he makes pretty near as awkward an appearance as a Laplander; and one would certainly conclude, that he is a perfect stranger to courtly Fastosus. But all the world knows, that Avaro is a very respectable personage in Holland.

FAST. I told you before, cousin, that you have an ugly way of encroaching upon your neighbour's right. I do not like it, cousin, and will assert my dominion. Do you think that Mynheer is not full as proud of his multiplicity of garments, as an English hero of his scarlet and lace? Or, that he is not the best fellow who can wear the greatest number of pairs of breeches? I assert, there may be as

much pride under a Dutchman's cap as under a Scotch bonnet, or even under a Frenchman's hat ; notwithstanding there is a very great difference between the first and the last. The first, you know, is a fixt ponderous substance, and the last is mutable, as the weathercock on the top of St. Peter's. Yes, Avaro, I may assert farther, that there may be as much pride under a red cap, as under the coronet of a peer, or even under the mitre of an arch-bishop.

INF. That Avaro is in high esteem in the Netherlands, will not be denied ; but to suppose Fastosus excluded from any people whatever, is highly dishonoring ; therefore, my son, you must learn to be more cautious, and for the present to make atonement for your error, proceed with your account of your corporation.

AVAR. If to retract an error, and endeavour in future to oblige, will procure forgiveness, it shall be done.—In order to which you will please to observe that the

IV. Company of my corporation, is that of the letter-retailers, otherwise called mercenary-scribblers, and false-publishers. The transcribers and abridgers of other men's works, and especially those whose sole aim is to get money by their writings, are free of this company, and on the livery.

To give you a proper idea of which, I shall read you a letter which I stole the other night,

from the chairman of a reading society in the country, designed to be sent to the Reviewers, critical and monthly.

GENTLEMEN,

WE are, what country people call a reading society, into which we had formed ourselves some years before the first Review made its public appearance. We had not long taken in books, before we found several articles of our purchase to be stolen from other authors; and but very few of our titular authors, had either honor or honesty enough, to inform the public from what sources they compiled their volumes. We would advise all writers to live upon their own proper genius, deeming it a pity that pilferers should be suffered in the republic of letters. At the last meeting of our club, this question was put and canvassed, “What can induce one writer to steal from another?”

To this important question, one replied one thing, and another said what he could to confute it, as every member was willing to display his abilities; at last, Dick Keene, a testy kind of youth, but of good sense, gave us the following satisfactory answer.

“Very probably, said master Dick, some authors may steal from others, for the same reason which that celebrated fool of old had, who burnt himself and the temple together, in

order to perpetuate his name. There are authors, endued with the same laudable ambition who not being happy enough to have been born free in the literary republic, are obliged to stoop to dishonest measures, in order to gratify their ambition. Their geniuses (if it be lawful to speak of their geniuses) being destitute of every prolific principle, and their fancies fixed as the Pyrenean or the Alps ; they cannot possibly gain repute but on the credit of their predecessors. Therefore, what frugal nature, and Gamaliel hath with-held, must be supplied by industrious freedom ; and as the end proposed must at all events be obtained ; honor, truth and honesty, smoke at once on the altar of ambition. To work goes the writer, plunders every volume in his own and his patron's library, at last completes his scheme ; and lo ! we have an entire new work, by the learned Mr Dunce. And so it comes to pass, that we, the honest purchasers, pay three or four times over for the same matter, and perhaps in almost the same manner likewise.

There are others, who, as a just judgment on their former indolence and extravagance, are now condemned to live upon their wit ; which being dull and tardy, somewhat a-kin to the brain of an ass, of itself can afford but a very penurious table, and uncomfortable lodg-ing. Bitten with hunger, the unhappy man is obliged to steal where he can, and then to sell his ill gotten collection to the bookseller, in

order to procure a good holiday dinner. The bookseller, I believe is pretty well convinced of the truth of my remarks, as he has paid smart for his connection with literary thieves.

Of these two kinds of pilferers, in my humble opinion, the latter is by far the most excusable. He cannot work, he is ashamed to beg, therefore must either steal or starve. What can he steal with more safety than the works of the learned? In my opinion, there is no more danger in robbing a gentleman of his literary honor, than for a statesman to rob his mother country: few such thieves are conducted by the country officers to Tyburn. Oh solemn tree what frauds are committed against thee? Of how many necks, equitably thine, art thou cheated annually?"

'Twas now Bill Candour, a good natured youth, interrupted him, thinking his reflections somewhat severe. "Hold! Mr Keene, I think your reasoning is too full of acrimony. If all transcripts, extracts and abridgments, were to be suppressed, it would be a very great loss to the public; those men therefore, who take the trouble of such a service, deserve open acknowledgment, for raising up valuable authors from the vaults of oblivion, instead of being lashed with the rod of merciless satire." To which Dick replied,

"That many ancient writings, are truly worthy of being introduced to public view, I am so far from denying that, I should deem

it truly laudable, for any gentleman of capacity and leisure, to draw forth the remains of antiquity from the cells of obscurity, and should be one of the first to vote him the most public thanks. But I would have it done in such a manner, as to come within the reach of the middle class of people, amongst whom the bulk of all sorts of readers are found. Moreover, I would have writings on religious subjects so contrived, as to come within the reach of the poor, for who else give themselves any trouble about religion, or have any pleasure in serious writings? If a commentary on the Bible must go beyond the extent of their finances, it might as well be locked up in Pool's Synopsis, where it was before the commentary was written. Opulent tradesmen you know, are such slaves to the laws of getting, that they have no time to read, and therefore may prudently avoid purchasing. And people of fashion, are generally perfectly satisfied with having such or such books in their libraries, without so much as looking farther into them than the title pages. Surely, gentlemen, no man is to be vindicated in making merchandise of his neighbour's genius."

Here he concluded, and we were soon convinced, that there was much weight in his reasoning. We must beg leave to tell you, gentlemen, that when your worships erected your tribunal, and every author was summoned to appear before you, we flattered a hope, that all

pilferers would have fled out of the republic of letters. But, alas ! we have been hitherto disappointed, and in reality, they seem to be on the increase, so that a man can hardly claim personal right to a single idea, how justly soever it may be his property.

We earnestly beg that you, gentlemen, will be obliging enough to publish your aversion to this craft ; to command all, who are destitute both of fortune and genius, to reconcile themselves to their destiny, and shew their submission to the higher power, by learning some handicraft business, by which they may gain an honest living. There are a thousand ways to live in the world, if that of an author were to cease. For instance, there is carrying a musket, or beating a drum by land, and furling the sails by sea, either of which are honorable employments, when compared with that of book-stealing.

As we know not to whom we can apply with any hope of success, but to yourselves ; we must farther beg, that you will not only detect the theft, when you meet with it but do as the worthy inhabitants of St. Giles's do on similar occasions. That is, pursue the delinquent with a stop-thief ; stop-thief. Indeed gentlemen, it will not lessen you in the public esteem, should you commence even literary thief catchers. Should it please you to comply with our request, we doubt not but the streets which lead to places of public resort,

will in a few years be well lined with many authors, having assumed the more honorable employment of a beggar.

Thus the imposts would be taken off from the studious; real authors would preserve their honor, no one daring to invade their right, for fear of exposing themselves to public infamy. Perhaps that most villainous of all practices may be put a stop to; we mean the vending of cloudy commentaries on the Bible: few people we should think, would be fond of purchasing such books, after they are informed that most of the materials are stolen. Effectually to put a stop to this iniquitous practice, we would recommend the publication of the above named Synopsis in English, and then every reader may take what human sense of the divine word he pleases.

We are gentlemen,

Your most humble servants,

A READING SOCIETY,

FAST. Indeed, cousin, I think the request of that society reasonable enough, and ought to be granted; for as the world now goes, it is a difficult matter for a man to know to whom he is obliged, for any profitable hint he meets with in the course of his reading. And flimsy as modern productions in general are, there is now and then a profitable hint to be met with. But when any thing of a recommendatory quality, happens to emerge from the teem-press;

the whole race of catch-penny imitators, swarm about it, and gobble it up, then spew it out, as if it were their own. However, cousin, it must be owned, there are some of your mercenary scribblers who are much more honorable than others; and let the public know, that what they write is not the fruit of their own genius, but is borrowed from this or that respectable author, under pretence of making it more public, on account of its great excellency. They desire not to rob the author of his honor: all they deem necessary, is a loan of his genius to supply the defects of their own, and to help them a little forward in the world.

But of all writers, commend me to polemic divines. Oh! it would be a pleasure to the devil himself, to see with what dexterity they put off their own anger, under the name of zeal for God; just as the industrious tradesmen of Birmingham, do their manufacture for the coin of the nation. 'Tis amazing to think, how protestant ministers can lug in the almighty into both sides of their quarrel; and how they would make the world believe, that their cause is the cause of heaven, and that they have got authority to dispense the curses of the most High. Nothing can be more pleasing, than to see men of wisdom and religion, vigorously contending for their own honor, and at the same time making the public believe, they have nothing in view but the Redeemer's glory. And I assure you it is not every divine,

even of great parts, who takes time to distinguish between the glory of God, and his own reputation.

Next to this, I am delighted to see men of learning and religion, bickering each other about subjects, which the greatest of all the apostles would not presume to pry into. But we have divines so expert, that they understand what never was revealed; and so zealous, that they will oblige others to have the same degree of intelligence with themselves, under pain of their implacable displeasure; and yet they are the true ministers of the meek and loving Saviour. But a very few are to be met with, who have humility enough to submit to the simplicity of scripture. However, cousin, although I love to set forth my own powerful influence, I would not willingly prevent your proceeding with your story. Mean while, I want you to be more explicit with regard to your company of letter venders. Do you mean by them printers in general?

AVAR. No, gentlemen, I do not mean, neither all the booksellers nor printers. Printing has been to mankind one of the greatest of all temporal blessings, and will, I much fear, be the total ruin of the kingdom of darkness; as wherever the freedom of the press is suffered, it carries reformation along with it. But amongst those concerned in literary affairs, there are many villainous people, who, when their trade runs low, take up with printing

corrupting novels, such as the Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure ; blasphemous plays, such as Sammy Foot's Minor ; schismatic harangues, like the greater part of political essays ; vain disputes about things of trivial import, &c. all such, and many such there be, we rank with the false publishers, because truth and falsehood are with them of equal value, and their choice is fixed by what will serve a present turn. The patriotic alderman is a leading man in this learned company. He has not learned so little by the gift of second sight, which he has had from his cradle, as not to know, that more than truth is indispensably necessary, to support some particular personal characters. Besides there are others, who will sell both soul and body to the father of lies, in defence of some particular state ; and others to ruin some public character. The celebrated Mr Maubert of Brussels is a great man in this way.

Free of this company, are another set of men, implacable enemies to honest industry, who live altogether by their wit ; appear in all shapes and characters, and stick at nothing to get money. Although these people have nothing but grimace to sell, (through a folly, formerly almost peculiar to the metropolis, but now diffusing itself every where) they have for six months in the year a very plentiful market ; and many who would suffer the miserable to perish unrelieved at their gates, will liberally contribute to support the luxury and libertinism

of the players. In the days of yore, the devil Proteus was, but now David Garrick, Esq.; is their foreman; a fast friend to our government, and a faithful disciple of careful Avaro.

DISC. I think you must be mistaken now cousin, for the end of all theatrical entertainments, which I perceive you have in view, is the exposing of vice and reformation of manners; consequently their design was originally religious.

A VAR. I allow, that in the darkness of paganism, the ancients had a religious design, in exhibitions of the stage; but what of that? They had likewise a religious design, in passing their children through the fire to the devil Molech. I allow, farther, that in the days of monkish ignorance, those blinking priests, made use of the stage to convey their instructions; but then it ought to be observed, that the same fathers were equally pious, and devout in persecuting the best of men. So then, cousin, the one is as much authorised by ancient practice as the other. Indeed when you consider, that the stage is peopled by extravagant, spend-thrift gentlemen, broken tradesmen, lazy mechanics, who always were avowed enemies to moral integrity; they will appear to be a very unpromising race of reformers.

Should you follow them from the stage to their lodgings, and trace their steps through the lanes of private life, you would soon be convinced, that Sir John Fielding's runners, bid much

more fair than they, for reforming the manners of the people. And you know, the said runners have never as yet, been considered as the most respectable characters. Surely, it must be thought requisite in those who set up, for reformers of others, that in some tolerable degree they should moralize themselves.

Disc. I know it, cousin ; and I thwarted you on purpose, to see how you could justify your claim upon the gentry of the stage ; and must confess you have done it to my satisfaction. I am highly pleased with the entertainments of the theatre myself, and am greatly delighted to see gentlemen and ladies crowd to them. Gentry who would worship God, in neither church nor meeting-house, can be devout enough to attend the theatres, in Covent-Garden and the Hay-Market. It is truly pleasing to see gentlemen and ladies, who cannot possibly find money to pay off their tradesmen's bills, find plenty of cash to purchase play-house and pantheon tickets.

INF. As we came along, cousin Discordans, you mentioned some sport you lately had with two female companions ; pray what of them ?

Disc. You must know Leonora and Matilda have been intimate from their infancy, and as such continued their friendship even to mature life ; but when both became wives and mothers, I taught them to behave more inconsistently, than they did when they were children. Matilda being quite fatigued with do-

mestic concerns, to attention to which her mind is not very happily turned, resolved one day to spend an afternoon with her friend Leonora. When she went she found her exceedingly deprest and hysterical, by no means in a talkative humour; a circumstance which frequently happens to the ladies of middle rank, ever since luxury and idleness became so prevalent amongst them.

Matilda not being sufficiently skilled in physiognomy, to read the sentiments of the heart, by the position of the features of the countenance, was led into a mistake, which proved fatal to their friendship. She discovered, or thought she discovered an unusual and unexpected shyness, run through every part of Leonora's conduct, which discovery proved no slight mortification to her own sensibility. Said she to herself, " Well Leonora, I perceive, notwithstanding all your former civility, that my company is not the object of your present desire. I wish I had been aware of it in time! then I assure you, my presence should not have drawn a cloud over that settled countenance of yours. But, indeed madam, let my company be ever so disagreeable to you, yours I assure you is now very little more pleasant to me."

Whilst she was meditating some plausible pretext for withdrawing, the tea was unhappily brought in, which precluded her removal for a little while longer. Thus constrained by decency to stay, her glowing resentment of the

supposed slight, forbid her to taste a morsel of the toast, or to drink above two dishes of tea. Having finished, she pretended, she must retire on some urgent business, which had just occurred to her mind; (for ladies will lie to serve a turn) and after a dry compliment or two she went off, fully resolved never to return.

As she went along the streets, her wounded heart boiled with a thousand cogitations, how or when, she had offended Leonora. "What have I done or said that should have given her umbrage. I know of nothing: and therefore I care not for her anger. If people would be so odd in their temper, they must even come to themselves at their leisure. And so your servant, Leonora."

INF. That was a visit more innocent, than many I have known; for I hear nothing of slander, or defamation of absent characters carried on in it, which very rarely happens to be neglected in female visits.

DISC. True, sir, but the matter did not end here. Poor Matilda, being unable to bear the conceived slight, made free to call on Letitia on her way home, that she might give a little vent to her turbulent passions. Letitia, being as destitute of innate ideas, as she is of fidelity, readily listened to the plaintive account, how Matilda had been served; without hesitation approved her departure, kindly fanned the flame of resentment, and at last advised her to

let Leonora come to herself when she should find it convenient.

Matilda had not been long gone, before Letitia who burned with impatience to have a little Tittle-tattle, went to Leonora, and set mischief abroach with her also. She told her all the former had said of her, and happily gave it such a turn, as to render it very offensive, notwithstanding, she kept strictly to the letter of truth. Some people are remarkably happy in talents of this kind ; by their manner of representation, they can turn things quite from their natural appearance, as I may perhaps shew you in some future conference. Leonora could not but think herself very ill used, and resolved, weakly as she was, that she would be a slave to no body's temper.

When Matilda and Leonora met next time, being prepossest with mutual disgust their compliments were dry and starched ; and each secretly blamed the indifference of the other. By this time, I furnished each of them with a telescope, by which they might thoroughly examine each others conduct, and so reciprocally strict is their mutual watch, that nothing can escape them. Thus from the smallest beginning, founded too in misunderstanding, I raised perpetual disgust and enmity. Absurd, and ridiculous as this is, I could point you out a thousand differences, sprung from incidents equally frivolous, and unimportant. Indeed, if freedom and submission keep at a distance, I

can blow up a flame of contention the most violent from the smallest matters imaginable. And I thank my stars Mess. Freedom and Submission, are in no great esteem with mankind. But wherever they come, they destroy my seeds, and effectually extinguish my flames, for they are irresistible peace-makers.

FAST. It is I, even I, my son, who have brought those gentlemen into disrepute. I persuade people, it is beneath them to submit to their equals, how much soever they have been in the wrong. I have ere now persuaded one man to do all he could, to ruin the reputation of his neighbour, in order to establish his own, when he found it in a tottering condition; and that too amongst those who take themselves to be more righteous than others.

DISC. I have great pleasure sometimes in making parents become the instruments of their children's ruin. Or as some people say, to kill them with kindness. I make it my business to prejudice almost every parent, so far in favour of his children, that every one considers his own, as the most witty, and active; or to use the words of a good woman, concerning her son of two years old, (the most manly of any child in the neighbourhood,) even as the crow conceives her own, to be fairer than all the children of the feathered people.

I shall trouble you but with one instance, out of the millions I might produce. Little

master Jacky, was one of those extraordinary children, whose almost every action was out of the common way, the wonder and admiration of his astonished parents. Jacky must not be chid when he pinched, bit, or scratched his nurse, but must have his own pretty little humour ; it was even pleasing to see his lovely fist darted into his parents faces ; so you may be sure the child must not be suffered to cry upon any account, but must always be indulged in whatever he wanted. Thus this extraordinary child, in whom however, none besides his parents could see any thing out of the common way, notwithstanding every visitor was plagued with the history of his wonderful feats, upon which his parents dwelt with rapture. I say, Jacky found himself master of the whole family ; he acted accordingly, and took his own way in every particular.

By these means his tempers gained strength so that they became habitual, not to be broken by ordinary means.

When he got a few more years over his head, still growing in his humour, the poor parents began to see and lament the errors of their former conduct. Too late, master Jacky being now in breeches, and grown a great boy will not readily give back that dominion they were pleased to put into his hands, when but in petticoats. He thinks it very hard he should not choose for himself now he is ten, as well as when he was but three years old ;

rightly judging, that he was not more wise then than he is now, and if they thought him fit to be all their masters then, he is sure that by this time he is much more fit to govern.

Apprehensive now of the ruin of his son, the father exhibits exhortations, injunctions, reproofs, and threatenings, with great severity. In vain, for not being bended whilst tender and maleable, master's tempers are not now to be turned out of their native channel. As in former times I plied the parents, in prejudice of their darling, it was now time to ply him also in his turn. I furnished him with a pair of glasses, and directed him in the use of them; and now the youth began to reason upon his father's conduct.

“ What a change is this, come to my father? Once he was something like good-natured, but now he is the most self-willed and rigorous man in the world. Surely no reasonable person would impose such laws upon his children as he does on me; laws, such as nobody of any spirit would submit to. I was formerly his pretty lad, his good boy, and every thing I did was right; times are strangely changed, for now I can do nothing to please him. I could have had what I would and gone where I pleased; but now I am perplexed with warm exhortations, which I hear unreasonably frequent; and can go no where, without his leave, as if I had not more sense

now than when I was little. His reproofs are too harsh ; I hear of nothing but my stubbornness and wickedness ; of his and my mother's sorrow ; and of breaking their hearts on my account. I should break none of their hearts, I assure them if they would let me alone.

“ Cannot my father and mother grieve for themselves, and not tease me about their trouble ? I am no worse than my neighbours, though by their account I might be the wickedest wretch that ever lived. It is not enough that I must go to church on holidays, but we must have lectures on divinity at home ; and for me, I am roundly told, that if I go on as I do, I must certainly perish. Yes, I must even be damned and go to hell. Old people are surely very conceited ; I'll warrant me they think they are so very good, they are sure to go to heaven. It is a brave thing to have a good opinion of one's self, which surely must be their case, or they would never plague me thus with their repeated lectures. Well, for my own part, I am not so vain, and yet I think I am in no greater danger than they are. When they were young, I dare say they loved pleasure as well as me, but now they get old and cannot relish it themselves, they would absurdly restrain me from it. Reasonable parents ought not to form their commands upon what they now are, but what they were when of my age. But I am determined to submit to no such government, I will even take

my pleasure whilst I can have it, and let them grieve on if they choose."

Thus, gentlemen, I persuade many to lay up future afflictions for themselves, in the early ruin of their children, by over indulgence. I say early ruin, for if little master is not taught to submit to government whilst in petticoats, it is much if he ever learns submission after he is in breeches; he who always had his own way when but an infant, will take it very ill to be restrained when he rises towards manhood*. Yet some, yea many parents, will let their children do as they please whilst but little, and increase in their strictness as they advance in years, so that they become mutual afflictions to each other. In manhood, you know, children should be used by their parents as friends and confidents, instead of being kept at an awful distance. Yet those very parents, who have laid the foundation of their son's ruin, by early indulgence in his infancy, very often complete it by unseasonable strictness over him when he is verging towards man's estate. You know, parents should always act, so as that their company shall never be burdensome to their children. But I shall become moralist if I go on thus.

IMP. Many such youths as master Jacky fall into my hands; if once they can by any means be brought to despise reproof, I reckon myself quite sure of them; and when they

* Vid. Lock on Education.

come, I commonly employ them in my deepest mines.

INF. It is always a hopeful sign when the heart is hardened against reproof. If a young one can be brought to despise the commands, reproofs, and advice of his parents, he bids fair for being one of the devil's companions for ever ; and indeed, nothing but the grace of God can prevent it. It is very agreeable to us to see how happily successful our influences are over mankind, especially in Britain. There, many parents bring up their children, just as if they designed them purposely for the devil. I have great hopes of the next generation, gentlemen.

DISC. I make myself very merry with the ladies in another way, which also turns eventually to everlasting separation. I join a little knot of them together so closely for a time, that they cannot be separated, nor bear to be asunder for a day together. I prejudice them so strongly for a while in each other's favour, that they shew a manifest slight to those who are not happy enough to be admitted into their society. Family necessity, and every domestic duty, must give place to their firm attachment to one another. When they get together for a little chit-chat, they are as happy as the birds in May ; not only examine every absent character, within the circle of their acquaintance, and report to each other all the evil they know of their own sex : but each dwells severally

upon the excellencies or failings of her husband; who is at one time the best of men, at another time the worst, just as her ladyship happens to be in a good or bad humour with him. Thus they go on, till every one is fully acquainted with the family affairs of the rest, and thus they bring themselves into the power of one another. This is the zenith of that happiness to which I aim to bring them; for even the devil will give present happiness, in order to introduce future pain and sorrow; and I assure you I am too much a-kin to my worthy grandfather, to suffer that felicity to go long uninterrupted.

First, I sow a spirit of jealousy amongst them; says Chloe, “Delia seems more attached to Phillis than to myself or Lucia; Portia is never happy but when her and Arabella are together;” and so round the whole club the spirit of jealousy happily operates, and gathers strength by every day’s duration.

It is not to be thought that a whole society, who can cordially join in picking holes, according to the old proverb, in their neighbour’s clothes, can long refrain from doing as much for one another. Now they begin to meet two and two, according to their various attachments, and those two who happen to meet together, regale themselves with a very pleasant conversation, about the faults and weaknesses of those who are absent, and thus round the whole society they serve one another. By

and by it is whispered what Chloe said at such a place about Phillis ; what Lucia said of Arabella, &c. till I blow them all up in a pleasing flame of resentment ; and every one says the worst she knows of her neighbour, which commonly is a great deal. Out come personal faults along with family affairs, and an hundred etceteras, and those very ladies sit down, just as the devil would have them, in implacable hatred to each other.

INF. I pray what do you smile at, Avaro ?

AVAR. I was thinking on an encounter, I had with the devil Lunatio, whom I accidentally met last night, with his hair standing upright, and his eyes flaming with madness.

FAST. And pray where had that mad brained devil been ? What account could he give of himself ?

AVAR. He was quite snappish with me, and run on in his discourse as if he had been very angry. There, said he, is my father Infidelis ; there is uncle Fastosus, they reign uncontroll'd over the greatest part of mankind ; they are caressed, even adored, by the most respectable characters in both church and state. You yourself, groveling as you are, reign an absolute monarch in the will and affections of many eminent personages ; but I am hackneyed by the basest, and when I have done, am denied the honor of my labours, and people are taught to believe that I reign only over the bedlams,

and other mad-houses of the world. Whereas, I could make it appear to all the infernal divan, that there are people who go about at large, and are deemed in their perfect senses, more mad than any in bedlam.

Well then, said I, brother fiend, stop, and give me a sober account of your proceedings, and I assure you I shall give you all due acknowledgment.

LUN. I have, replied he abruptly, a great deal of business among statesmen, to drive people to their levees, which they dearly love to have crowded, and which never could be without my assistance; for who would attend the levee of my lord Superbo, or of his grace the duke of Parkland, unless he first turned fool? Would any man feed on the promise of a courtier, if he were not mad? The dinner of the camelion is as weighty as the promise of the greatest statesman, were it even confirmed by a smile of the countenance and a grasp of the hand, for it all means no more, than "I am glad to see you thicken my levee." There is never a levee day but I am obliged to bestir myself to drive the fools together.

If the premier, or the head man of any department, finds himself on the decline, and that he shall, without some good assistance, be obliged to resign; i. e. be turned out of his place, I am beseeched to procure some verbose, intrepid scribbler, to cry up his abilities and proceedings, as much superior to those of

all his predecessors, for time immemorial. But a man must first be reduced to a state of lunacy, before he will venture on a work so difficult, and which is likely to be but very ill rewarded. In the first place, he is likely to have truth and fact to overturn, before the end can be obtained, and these you know are stubborn and obstinate. In the second place, if he is happy enough to succeed, and sets down his patron firmly in his chair again, he is soon made to understand that his service has done him little or no good; he is thanked for his good intention, but is given to know, that things would have been just as they are, if no defence at all had been made. If his patron is turned out, the scribbler is blamed for having omitted something which might have been of service, instead of being rewarded for what he has done. So that at all events he must come off loser, and therefore none but a madman will venture on the undertaking.

The lawyers also, would but for my influences, be obliged to drive teams or follow ploughs; for who but madmen would ever find them employment? But in consequence of their firm attachment to our government, I persuade some to expose themselves by slowness of payment of their just debts, to the fangs of the lawyers; others to quarrel about trifles, and refer the matter to them for decision. Sometimes I advise a father to leave his daughter under the guardianship of an attor-

ney, or an uncle to leave his estate to his minor nephew, under the care and inspection of a counsellor ; either of which is likely to be a lucrative job to the gentlemen of the law. You know very well, continued he, that none but madmen will ever refer their differences to the decision of those gentlemen, whilst there are three honest men to be met with in the nation ; nor will any man in his right mind ever leave an attorney executor to his will.

There are abundance of people who live above their revenues, and others still who have abundance, but dare not make use of it, dare scarcely allow themselves the common necessities of life, for fear of future poverty. I have known a lady of sixty, possest of two or three thousand pounds per annum, actually afraid of dying for want. Those gentry are all under my dominion ; besides a very great share of my influence rests on many others, who are grievously opprest with troubles which never happen ; some are so remarkably ingenious, as to apprehend difficulties for themselves and offsprings, for a great many years to come, as if the evil of the day were not sufficient of itself.

Stop Lunatio, said I, there you touch me sensibly, I will not thus give up my careful subjects. True, replied he, but you and I may play into one another's hands. And although I allow them to be yours, it is easy to see abundance of madness in their disposition and con-

duct. What wisdom I pray you, is there in any man's burdening himself to day, with what may or may not happen a twelvemonth hence? Less still in pretending to foresee what may happen in future; seeing all future events are locked up in the council of the eternal mind.

From the thinking and careful people, we may descend to the young and frolicsome, who eager to pry into the cabinet councils of destiny, are duped by daring pretenders to sooth-saying and palmistry. As if a designing gipsy, or any other deceiver, could unriddle futurity by the lineature of the hand. There ought to be places provided in Bedlam, for all the curious, who cannot be satisfied with knowing the contents of to-day.

Wisdom will always wish futurity to lie concealed, till occurring events disclose the mysterious page; and moral goodness will never wish, to intrude upon the secrets of the Almighty; but rest perfectly satisfied with what is revealed.

I would also have a place provided either in Bedlam, or St. Luke's, for all who, upon sustaining loss by thieves or otherwise, have recourse to pretended astrologers, and reputed conjurers. Every body besides fools, knows that the stars are dumb, and cannot speak, or that their prophets do not understand the language of the luminaries. Besides it has a frantic look to suppose, that honest Jupiter and

old crabbed Saturn, with their lucid brethren, have nothing else to do besides standing centry on this man's horses, that woman's clothes, the other girl's box, or the farmer's orchard. Indeed, if the stars have any other business to attend, besides watching people's moveables, they may happen to be busy when certain robberies are committed, and therefore cannot give such clear accounts of matters, as their petitioners might wish for ; and I think, none but madmen would spend their money upon such uncertainty.

You are all alike, for laying claim to my subjects, so that I cannot have the honor of my own operations. There is my uncle Fastosus, who will suffer nobody so much as to speak to him, unless he happens to be in the humour. He lays claim to the discontented, whom I could prove by a thousand arguments, to be my own disciples. Discontent, gives an emphasis to every trouble, and aggravates every pain. Would a wise man then, cordially cherish any principle, which is sure to be the bane of his own happiness if cherished? To Bedlam I say, with all the fretful and discontented.—Make haste, provide cells in St. Luke's, for all who are uneasy about their countenance, shape and complexion. A wise man will not be ashamed of external deformity, any more than he will be proud of his comely proportion. And yet Lunatio can have little honor ascribed to him.

There are people of property who sink their

rents, fall their timber, mortgage their estates, in giving grand entertainments to hungry visitors and hangers-on, after the example of Timon of Athens, in order to be thought generous and great. Not once considering, that the nearest way to esteem is still to preserve the golden cord in the hand of the owner. Let all be once spent, the insatiable hangers-on who crowd the plenteous table, will drop off like leaves in autumn, and if the wretch retains the loving regard of Argus his dog, he must expect no more. Away with the fool to Bedlam. He ought to go no longer without shackles.

Parents there are, so doatingly fond of their children, that they strip themselves of their possessions, in order to make them respectable in the world, long enough before their own lives are at a period; leaving their future support to the good nature, and mercy of the dear boy or girl, who it is thought are so well disposed, as to be incapable of ingratitude to those who gave them being. But let the dear boy, or girl, once get the parents estate into their power, and they will give them occasion enough to lament their folly, when every shilling received, shall come with a very intelligible frown. The language of which to the parent is, "I wish you were once in your grave." Such parents ought to be provided for at the public expence, and kept in some place of confinement like other lunatics.

Other parents to avoid falling into that error,

which they foresee may be productive of great personal inconvenience ; with an equal degree of madness flee into the opposite extreme. They can find in their hearts to part with nothing whilst they live ; they will find some plausible pretext or other, for which they will retain the sole possession of their goods and chattels ; rather than give a suitable measure of parental assistance, will suffer the young people to begin the world, under all possible disadvantages. Send such parents to Newgate, I say, for they are worse than mad.

You do me injustice again, Avaro, in claiming the sole power to yourself, over parents, who will oppress their servants, over-reach their neighbours, grind the faces of the poor, and sell their souls to the devil, in order to procure fortunes for their children. This is so far from answering the end proposed, in gaining the love and esteem of the young people, that it has quite a contrary tendency. The greater the estate, the more impatient will the heir apparent be, to be put into quiet possession for himself. The more there is dependent upon the death of a parent, the more eager will children be to have him out of the way. So eager have some been, that they have been obliged to use violence, in order to get the cumbersome old man out of the world. Deliver them up to me, Avaro, for they are all the children of madness. And yet Lunatio is deemed a foolish devil, and a son of idleness.

You are very prone, to ascribe to chance or accident, and other such chimerical gentry-works, the honor of which is due only to myself. Ay, you are apt to conclude, that, there is even no madness in religion. Pride and covetousness may prevail ever so, but you never think of madness. What less than madness is it to worship a wooden Saviour, or a Jesus Christ of man's making? To adore a god that has been baked in an oven; or to pretend to eat the deity? I could open such a field before you, as would make you wonder at the boundings of religious madness.

Go with me to the chambers of the sick, and see the works of madness there performed. That lady having over eaten herself at dinner, finding her stomach uneasy, took a glass of brandy to help digestion, after that another, &c. till she is now very ill upon it. The physician is sent for, and after feeling her pulse, asks her a pertinent question or two, as! Do you feel an uneasiness at your stomach, madam? Does your head ach, madam? Have you a thirst upon you, madam? You were taken ill after dinner, were you, madam?" He prescribes a gentle purgative draught or two, to assist nature to throw off her load, after having thus learned the cause of her disorder. Now there's an instance of a threefold madness for you. In the first place, although the food was rich and delicious, it was madness to eat after nature said it was enough. Second-

ly, it was madness to pour such a quantity of strong liquor, into a stomach already glutted. And thirdly, it was madness to send for a physician, seeing she would be well enough by to-morrow noon, by which time nature unassisted might have struggled from beneath its burden. Shall I never have due honor paid to my operations?

This other woman before you, is indeed in a dangerous fever; but she will have no assistance. It is only a deep cold she has caught, and she hopes to get better in a day or two, with care and keeping warm. By and by; when the symptoms of death are actually upon her, the physician must be sent for in all haste. — And when the fever alone, is more than nature can sustain, she must have the additional torment of swallowing medicines, even without a possibility of their being of the least service. Is there no madness in this case? Is it not madness to trifle with a disease in its beginning, the only time perhaps, in which medicine can afford relief? Is it not equally madness to torment the sick, and throw money away upon the doctor, when the disease is evidently beyond a remedy? And yet you would exclude me from having any share in the government of mankind.

No Lunatio, returned I, we do not exclude you. We should even be glad to have a full account of your operations in some of our friendly meetings.

LUN. I could give you such an account as would surprise you all, might the honors due to my operations be properly acknowledged. But I cannot stay now, having urgent business in the west end of a certain metropolis.

Pray, cousin, may a brother fiend be acquainted with it? said I: he replied, you know, that; almost the one half of the nation is in a starving condition, and are as it were, on the tip toe of rebellion. Yet in a very great strait, how to act. They think it hard to famish amidst plenty; to die of hunger whilst the barns are full of corn, and the pastures are well peopled with cattle; whilst their governors can afford to spend thousands at a horse race, or in an evening's play. On the other hand they think it hard to be shot at, by those who are murderers by profession; or to be hung up at Tyburn for seeking to procure bread for their families.

In this dilemma, the poor wretches are raising their voices to government, beseeching their lawgivers, to spare so much time from their own pleasure and amusement, as to take their wretched case into serious consideration, that they may not die by artificial famine. What I aim at is, to persuade those in power to treat their complaints with neglect, and themselves, as clamorous, uneasy and turbulent people. Instead of redressing their grievances, to threaten them with the strict execution of the laws against rioters. If I am happy enough to gain this

point, as I think I shall; we shall soon see the spirit of madness raving all over the nation, and even the wise will become fools.

Oppression you know will make even a wise man mad. Therefore when their oppressions can no longer be borne, there will go forth a spirit of insurrection among the people; and that shall be followed by a spirit of murder, till all the riots are sufficiently quelled, and the leading insurgents punished by death or transportation. Then will follow a spirit of emigration, and every one almost, will wish himself to have been transported at the expence of government. At this very time, there are not less than five hundred thousand families, who are kept in their native country by nothing, but the want of means to get cleverly out of it. Neighbouring nations will give all possible encouragement to the poor to settle with them, every opportunity will be taken to cross the Atlantic, till the nation referred to, shall become almost, if not quite depopulated.

Now the madness of the scheme lies here. The true riches of a nation are its inhabitants, and the grandeur of the great, depends wholly on the numbers of those in inferior stations. In proportion therefore to the oppressions of the poor, will the nation decrease in its strength. Every emigration from the mother country, will either increase the number of colonists, or strengthen the hands of natural enemies; of course the neglect of the present complaints,

will eventually be the entire ruin of the great men themselves, and the translation of the empire to another, and very distant seat. Yet after all, perhaps it will be alleged, that Lunatio hath no influence. But I shall raise myself an immortal name, upon my own foundation. I deign no more converse with a grovelling spirit——adieu.

INF. This same Lunatio is a spirit active enough, and we give him due respect; but he is like all his disciples fixt in his own views, and there is no giving him proper ideas of things. I should be glad, Fastosus, to hear more fully what you were saying last night concerning the sadducees, it might be informing to these younger devils.

FAST. You know, sir, they were a set of deists among the Jews, who like the modern deists did not believe, that there are any angels good or bad, or shall be any resurrection from the dead. I did not only persuade the scribes, pharisees, and doctors of the law, to lay aside judgment, mercy and the love of God, in order to establish their own traditions: but wrought upon the sadducees to prefer their own reasoning, to the plainest declarations of the word of revelation. I assured them, that the well informed author of the book of Job, was under a delusion, when he said by the Holy Ghost, “I know that my redeemer liveth, and that I shall stand with him at the latter day upon the earth, and although after my skin,

worms destroy this body, yet in the flesh I shall see God." I persuaded them also, that the prophet Isaiah was under the like mistake, when he foretold, that death shall be swallowed up in victory: as also Daniel who asserted, "that many, who then slept in the dust shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to everlasting dishonor." These, together with the testimonies of all the prophets, I persuaded them to reject, merely because they could not comprehend them, nor account for it how the dead should rise.—This you know is the very reason why modern deists are pleased, under the same influence, to deny the whole system of revealed truth.

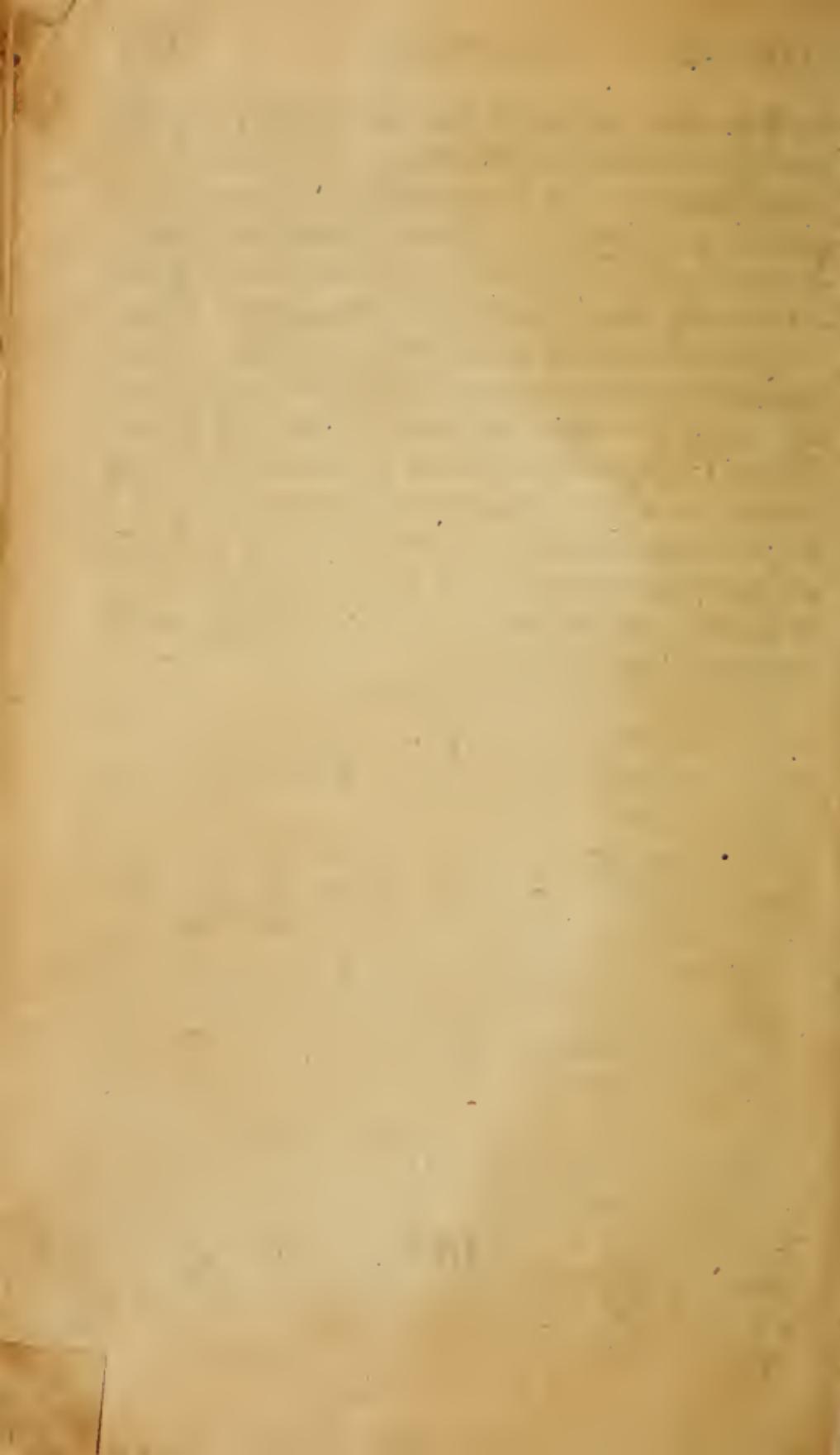
DISC. I have often feasted my mind, on the pleasing prospect of that amazement and surprise, which shall overtake those infidels, when the avenues of immortality shall open before them; and the terrors of an incarnate, a despised God and Saviour, shall overwhelm them in the floods of horrid despair. Their pretended virtue, their philosophic fortitude, their boasted reason will fail them, when they see, to their everlasting confusion that he who despiseth the Son, despiseth also the Father who sent him.

FAST. The deist is my faithful, deluded disciple. Wherever you meet with a man of deistical principles, you will easily discern my image at large on his forehead, and my mark on his right hand. Nothing but pride can in-

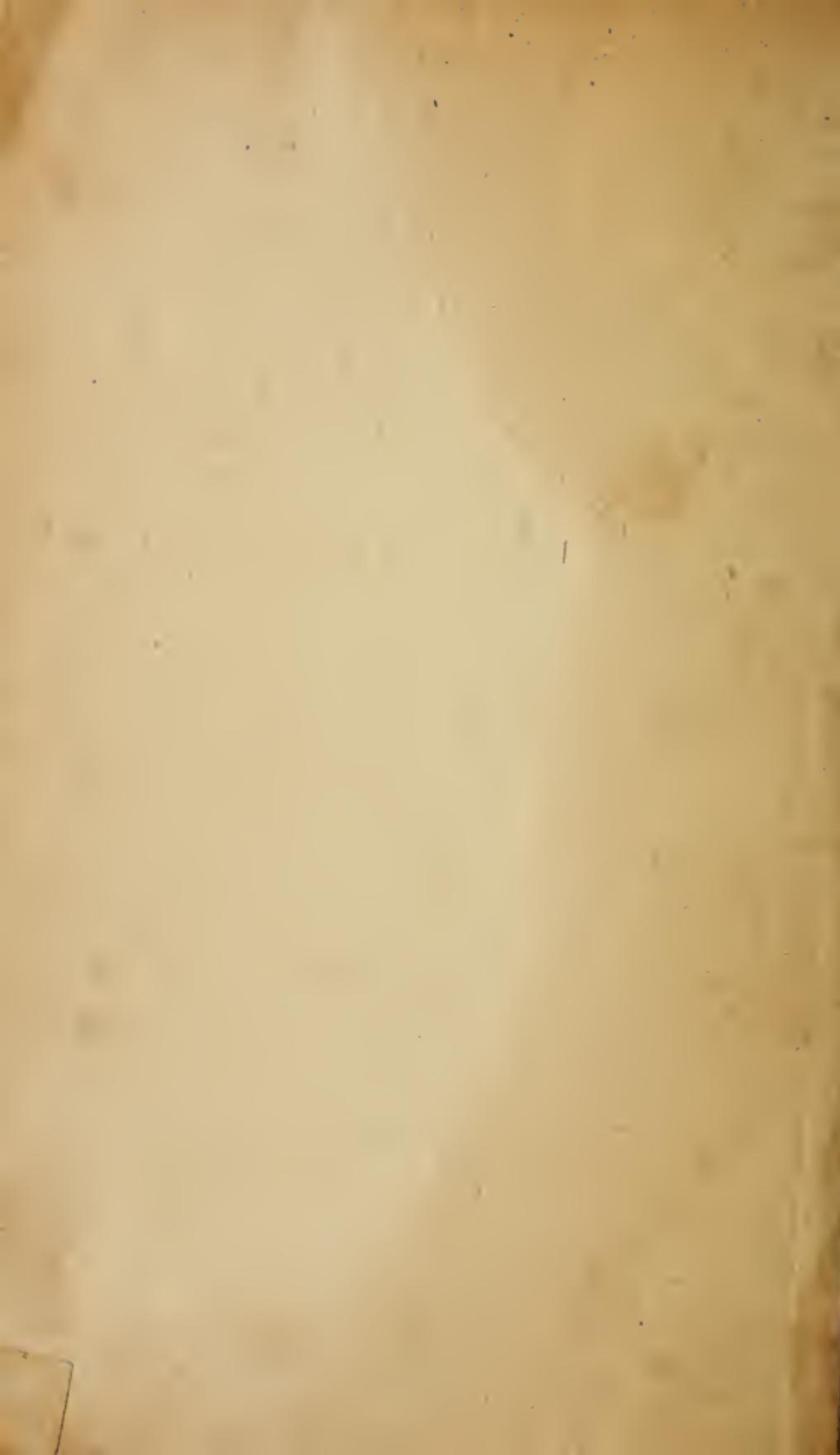
duce a man, to prefer his own reason to the dictates of sacred Revelation. Fastosus here stopt, and seeming in a terrible agitation, thus address his brethren. Let us flee my friends —Let us flee—for yonder comes Michael the archangel, and with him a numerous train, with whom we are not able to contend. They instantly took wing, shot through the yielding air, and I saw them no more. Nor am I certain if I shall ever have an opportunity of listening to their friendly conferences again; but if I should, as is not impossible, the public may expect to hear what passes among them, so far as may come to the knowledge, of a sincere friend to mankind.

THE LISTENER.

FINIS.











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